

JUDITH MOORE;
OR,
FASHIONING A PIPE.

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" HE tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep, cool bed of the river.

" Hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard, bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of the leaf, indeed,
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river !)

Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor, dry, empty thing
In holes as he sat by the river.

'This is the way,' laughed the great god Pan,
. . . 'The only way since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed.'

. . . Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river."

—MRS. BARRETT BROWNING.

W.F. 1400
JUDITH MOORE;

OR,

FASHIONING A PIPE.



BY

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Author of "The Untempered Wind," etc.



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JUDITH MOORE.

CHAPTER I.

"Behold a sower went forth to sow."

ANDREW CUTLER, with his graceful and melancholy red Irish setter at his heels, walked swiftly across his fields to the "clearing" one morning late in spring.

He was clad in the traditional blue jeans of the countryman, and wore neither coat nor vest; a leathern belt was drawn about his middle. His shirt, open a bit at the throat, and guiltless of collar and tie, displayed a neck such as we see modelled in old bronzes, and of much the same colour; for Andrew Cutler was tanned to the point of being swart. His head had a somewhat backward pose, expressive of an independence almost over-accentuated.

His hair was cropped short, and was of a sun-burnt brown, like his long moustache. His eyes were blue-grey, that softened to hazel or hard-

ened to the hue of steel. His nose was aquiline with the little flattened plateau on the bridge that we call "Spanish." His chin was strong—the chin of a man who "manlike, would have his way."

Mother Nature must laugh in her sleeve at the descriptive names we tack to her models. This man so completely satisfied the appellation "aristocratic," that, with the stubbornness of much-humoured word, it persists in suggesting itself as the best vehicle to describe this young farmer, and indeed the combination would seem entirely to the advantage of the adjective, which is often seen in poor company. A veritable rustic Antinous he was, with broad chest, slight lithe loins, and muscles strong as steel. Slung athwart his shoulder was a sack of coarse brown canvas that bulged with a heavy load; but he strode on, his balance undisturbed, and presently he stood upon the verge of the clearing. That was simply a part of the woodland that Andrew was taking under cultivation. A somewhat unpromising piece it looked, with its stubble stumps standing irregularly amid the broad furrows—(for it had been ploughed, in seed-fashion as ploughing may be done when one is to twist around stumps, over stones, and through long strong roots).

Andrew remembered the ploughing, as he walked across to begin his sowing, like the good farmer that he was, at the end-rigg. Here was the stump that had resisted gunpowder, leverage and fire, and that now was being tortured by saltpetre, charged in a deep augur hole. Well, it had been a right brave old tree, but the saltpetre would win to the stout oaken heart yet. It was perhaps a step in the right direction, this clearing of the woodland, but all progress seems cruel at first. Here—as he passed over what seemed a particularly smooth bit—the great stone lay hidden that had broken his ploughshare off with a crash, and sent him flying from between the plough-stilts. He would remember that stone for some time! So doubtless would good old Bess, whose patient brown shoulders had borne the brunt of the shock.

Ploughing a field is like ploughing the sea—one needs must have a chart of each to steer safely. That more formidable sea, "whose waves are years," has no chart. Next winter would see the uprooting of all these stumps, and the felling of more trees beyond. Next spring the plough would pass straight from end to end, and the seed-drill would sow the space which now he was about to sow in the old classic fashion—as they sowed, in intervals of stormy peace, the

grain after the wooden ploughs on the Swiss hillsides; as Ulysses sowed the salt upon the sea-shore; as the sowers sowed the seed in the far-off East, as has been handed down to us in a matchless allegory.

He began his task, hand and foot moving in rhythm, and cadenced by the sharp swish, swish of the grain as it left his hand, spreading far and wide over the soil. It takes a strong wrist and a peculiar "knack" to sow grain well by hand, and he had both.

The dog followed him for a couple of ridges but, besides the ploughed ground being distasteful to him (for he was a dainty dog and fastidious), the buckwheat hit him in the eyes, and his master paid no heed to him, a combination of circumstances not to be borne; hence, he shortly betook himself to the woodland, where he raised a beautiful little wild rabbit and coursed after it until with a final kick of its furry heels it landed safe beneath a great pile of black walnut logs built up criss-cross fashion to mellow for the market. Rufus (named from "William the Red" surnamed Rufus") returned to his master, however, dejectedly, but with a melancholy contempt for the rabbits that would not "run it out," but took shelter in a sneaking way where they could not be come at.

By this time Andrew was well on with his work. The sack beneath his arm was growing limp, he himself was warm. He paused as a bird flew up from a turned sod at his feet, and a little search showed the simple nest of a grey-bird—open to the sun and rain, built guilelessly, without defence of strategy or strength.

There is something amiss with the man or woman whose heart is not touched by a bird's nest—the daintiest possible epitome of love, and home, and honest work, and self-sacrificing patience. Andrew had thrashed many a boy for robbing birds' nests, and had discharged a man in the stress of haying because he knocked down the clay nests of the swallows from beneath the granary eaves with a long pole. Now he bent above this nest with curious tender eyes, touching the spotted eggs lightly whilst the bird, whose breast had left them warm, flitted to and fro upon the furrows. He remained but a moment (the bird's anxiety was cruel), then, fixing the spot in his memory that he might avoid it in the harrowing, he was about to go on his way, when his ears were assailed by a succession of the sweetest sounds he had ever heard—note after note of purest melody, flung forth unsyllabled, full-throated to the air, inarticulate but eloquent. Again and again it came, liquid, rich,

and with that pathos which perfection always touches.

At first he could not fix the direction from whence it came. It was as if the heavens above had opened and showered down music upon his heart as he had flung forth the seed upon the earth; and indeed there were two sowings that morning and from each harvests were garnered—first the bloom and then the fruit thereof. But as he listened longer he knew it issued from the wood before him. At the first note some impulse made him snatch off his old felt hat, and he stood there, bareheaded in the sunshine, as one might stand to whom had come the pang of inspiration.

The singer was voicing no composition, only uttering isolated notes, or short *crescendos*, terminating in notes of exquisite beauty, but leaving a sense of incompleteness that was so intense as to be almost a physical pain to him—only forgotten when the next utterance robbed him of retrospect and filled him with hope. Any one who has heard a perfect singer practising knows the sensation. In such fashion the unseen sirens sang, and men willingly risked death to touch the lips that had been parted by such melodious breath.

Andrew still stood, and at last silence fell

tion always—a silence he hardly comprehended at first, so filled was it with the dream of sound that had passed, so instinct with expectation; but it forced itself upon him, and then suddenly round him there sounded all the commonplace noises of life—the croaking of a tree toad, the buzzing of a chance fly, the far-off shouting of men, and the sounds of birds—all that had been deadened to his ear by the magic of that voice.

he first note A voice—then whence?

f his old felt In two strides he was over the ploughed ground and in the woods. He searched through and through it in vain. He looked from its borders at his own far-off farm-house among its trees, at the gables of the village of Ovid clustering together, at the tin on the Baptist Church spire glistening in the midst, at the long low Morris homestead that nestled in a little hollow beyond his wood; but all was as usual, nothing new, nothing strange. No angel's glistening wing was to be seen anywhere.

pe. Any on Andrew's grain was spent, but the clearing was not yet all sown. So he went home leaving his task unfinished. From one thing to another was the rule of his busy life. He gave a cheery word or two to his aunt, Miss Myers, who kept house for him, and then he was off to town with

a waggon load of implements to be mended in time for the summer work.

That night a group of typical Ovidians were gathered in the kitchen of old Sam Symmons' house.

Sam Symmons lived in a frame house, just at the foot of the incline which led into the village from the north. Like many of the houses of Ovid, his was distinctly typical of its owner. The new house was such a rare thing in Ovid, that the old ones had time to assimilate the character of their possessors, and to assume an individuality denied to the factors of a more rapidly growing place.

Old Sam's house was a tumble-down, rakish, brave-looking old house, with shutters erstwhile painted green. They had once given the whole house quite an air, but their painful lapses in the way of broken slats, and uneven or lost hinges now superimposed upon it a look of indecision. One of the weather-boards at the south corner was loose and, freed from the nails' restraint, bent outward, as though beckoning the gazer. It was a hospitable old house, but wary, too, the ornate tin tops of the rain troughs round the roof giving it a knowing look.

The native clematis grew better over the weather-beaten gable than anywhere else

Ovid, and the Provence roses, without any care whatever, bloomed better.

It was as if the house and its environs were making a gallant but losing fight against encroaching time and adverse circumstances. So it was with old Sam.

He was an old man. Long before, when Canada's farmers were more than prosperous, when foreign wars kept the price of food grains high, when the soil was virgin and unexhausted, when the military spirit still animated the country, when regulars were in barracks at the nearest town, when every able man was an eager volunteer, when to drink heavily and swear deeply upon all occasions marked the man of ease, when the ladies danced in buckled shoes and *chéne taffetas*, and were worshipped with chivalrous courtesy and high-flown *sobriquets*—in those days old Sam Symmons had been known as "Gallant Sam Symmons," and had been welcomed by many high in the land.

He had ever been first in a fight, the last upright at the table, a gay dancer and a courtly fust. But now he was glad to get an audience of tolerant villagers to listen to his old tales. For instead of garnering his money he spent it freely, having ever a generous heart and open hand, and of late years he had fallen upon evil times, and

gone steadily down hill. Now he had only a strip of barren acres heavily mortgaged. He married late in life the daughter of a country doctor.

They had one child, a girl, whose mother died when she was four years old. Sam christened his daughter Susanna Matilda.

In the days of his youth—oh, the halcyon time—these two names had been the names of the hour. The Mabels, Lilys and Rubys of to-day were yet unborn.

Susanna Waring had been the belle of the county, and her lovers were willing to stake their honour upon her pre-eminence.

Matilda Buchanan had been called "The Rose of Canada," and when the Consul, her father, returned to England, she footed it bravely at the Court of St. James. She married a nobleman there.

They were long dead, these two beauties. Matilda Buchanan had left all her pomp, and Susanna Waring had passed away from all her unhappiness, for she married an officer who treated her brutally. Well, well, old Sam Symmons, gallant Sam Symmons then, had danced with both of them, had kissed Miss Waring's hand in a minuet, and knocked a man down for saying Matilda Buchanan rouged.

had only a She did—they all did in those days—but it was not for the profane lips of man to say
 gaged. He was not for the profane lips of man to say
 of a country. Thus Sam christened his daughter Susanna
 Matilda, and felt he had done his duty by her.

Another died. After his wife's death, her cousin, a good
 christened enough woman in a negative sort of way, kept
 house for him, and brought up the little girl.
 the halcyon When Susanna was eighteen, this woman died;
 e names of so Sam and his daughter were left alone.

Rubys of As has been said, quite a crowd was gathered
 in old Sam's kitchen that night in the last week
 of May. There was Sam himself, Jack Mac-
 kinnon (a neighbour's hired man and the most
 noted liar in Ovid), Eiram Green, Oscar Randall,

and Susanna. It may be said here that through-
 out Ovid and its environs Susanna's proper name
 was a dead letter. She was "Sam Symmons'
 Suse" to all and sundry. The Ovidian mind
 was not prone to poetry; still, this alliterative

name seemed to have charms for it, and perhaps
 the poetical element in Ovid only required devel-
 oping; and it may be that the sibilant triune
 name found favour because it chimed to some
 dormant vein of poesy, unsuspected even by its
 possessors.

The occasion calling forth the conclave in
 Sammons' kitchen was simply that his old
 mare was very sick; in fact, dying, as all save

Sam thought. As every man in Ovid prided himself upon his knowledge of veterinary science, the whole community stirred when it was spread abroad that there was an equine patient to practise upon.

Oscar Randall took the dim lantern from the table and went out. He returned, and awaited his opinion.

"Well, Os?" said Jack Mackinnon.

"If that was my horse—which she ain't, of course—I'd shoot her," said Oscar, deliberately.

"Shoot her!" said Jack Mackinnon; "she's a fine horse! Don't you do it, Mister Symmons. Well, there was old Mr. Pierson wot I worked for in Essex, he had an old mare, most dreadful and most terrible sick—sick for months. One day we drew her out in a field, to die easy and so's she'd be easy to bury. Well, by George, she got up, and old Mr. Pen—him wot I worked for as has the dairy farm—he came along, and he says to Mr. Pierson, says he, 'Wot'll you take for the mare?' 'Twenty-five dollars,' says the old man. 'She's my mare, then,' says Mr. Pen. 'I'll give you my note for her.' So Mr. Pen took her home and drove her in his milk-cart; and that spring he sold her two colts for a hundred dollars apiece, and in the fall he got two hundred dollars for a little black one; and Mr. Ellis, wot

an Ovid pride keeps tavern, he bought another pair of 'em in
 of veterinar winter, and gave a sorrel horse and a double
 stirred when outer for 'em. I tell you, she was a good old
 was an equine mare that, and we drug her out to die at old
 Mr. Pierson's, wot I worked for in Essex, and
 tern from the old Mr. Pen, wot keeps the dairy farm, he came
 turned, and along, and says, 'Wot'll you take for the mare?'
 And—"

anon. "Oh, shut up! Draw it mild, Jack," said
 ch she ain't, Ostar, irascibly.

ar, deliberate "Sam," said Hiram Green, slowly, "have you
 kinnon; "she tried Epsom salts? and ginger? and saltpetre?
 mmons. W and sweet spirits of nitre? and rye? and asa-
 worked for foetida? and bled her? and given her a bran-
 ost dreadful mash? and tried turpentine and salt?"

r months. O "Yes," said Sam, "I have, and she's no
 eld; to die ebetter."

Well, by Georg "Now, Sam," said Green, impressively, "did
 m wot I work you give her a 'Black's Condition Powder'?"

came along, a "No, I didn't," said Sam.

Wot'll you ta "I thought so," said Green, significantly.

ollars,' says "Do you keep them in the store?" queried
 a,' says Mr P Ostar Randall, aggressively. He felt aggrieved
 So Mr. Pen twi Hiram, having himself intended to ask
 milk-cart; abut the sweet nitre and turpentine.

s for a hund "Do you keep them?" he asked again.

got two hund "Yes, I do," admitted Hiram, "and I've
 and Mr. Ellis, wought one along in case Sam should like to
 it."

This rather crushed Oscar's insinuation as to Hiram's business policy in suggesting the remedy, so he sat silent, while old Sam and Hiram Green went out to administer the powder.

Jack Mackinnon, to whom silence was impossible, with the freedom of equality prevalent in Ovid, turned to where Susé sat making rick-rack.

"Wot are you making, Miss Suse?" he began, and without waiting for a reply, continued, "There was Adah Harris, daughter of old man Harris, wot was a carpenter and had a market garden, wot I worked for in Essex, and she was always a-doing things. She was busy every blessed minute, and I tell you she *was* smart when she married Henry Haynes wot kept a blacksmith's shop, wot I worked for: and when I came there, I left my clothes be, till I got a job, and when I went back after 'em, there was a blue shirt, and two paper collars in a box, and my mother's picture gone. Now I knowed pretty close to where them things went—and I'll have 'em back if I have to steal 'em. Why I thought no end of mother's picture, it was took standing. I wouldn't have lost that picture for a fifty-pound piece, and there 'twas gone and my new shirt and two collars I'd only had two months. I found them at Henry Haynes' wot married Adah."

uation as Harris. Old man Harris went carpentering and suggesting the kept a market garden, but, pshaw! Talk about old Sam and squashes, why we grewed one squash there took er the powder three men to get it into the waggon, and then ence was in rolled it up a board—why squashes—” but ality prevailed just then Hiram and old Sam came in. Old Sam e sat making blew the long-lit lantern out.

“Well, father?” Suse asked.

“She’s dead,” said Sam.

“Dead’s a door nail,” added Hiram.

“No!” said Jack, with exaggerated incredulity.

“You don’t say!” said Oscar, in a tone which betrayed a distinct conflict between self-satisfaction and proper sympathy. He could not resist adding in a lower key, “I seen as much.”

Soon the trio of visitors departed. Old Sam was smoking a last pipe when a knock came to the door. He opened it to find Andrew Cutler without.

“What’s this I hear about your mare?” he asked. “Is she dead?”

“Yes—couldn’t seem to do anything for her,” said old Sam, and brave as he was, his tone was somewhat disheartened.

“Well, it’s too bad, she was a good beast. Better have my little bay till you look about for another,” said Andrew.

Old Sam’s face lightened. “I’ll be glad to,”

he answered. "There's the orchard field to plough and I'm behindhand already, but"—his old pride forbidding him to accept so eagerly—"don't you need him?"

"No, not a bit," said Andrew. "Indeed, I shall be glad if you take him awhile. He's getting above himself."

"Well, I'll come along for him in the morning then," said Sam, relieved. "What have you been doing to-day?"

"Sowing buckwheat in the clearing, and went over to town with some mending," replied Andrew. "I'm just getting home."

"How does the clearing look?" asked Sam. "Free of water?"

"Yes, it's in good condition."

"Hiram Green says that there's a boarder coming to the Morris place. Did you see anything of it?"

"Man or woman?" asked Andrew, with sudden interest.

"Hiram didn't say. I took it was a man (Andrew's heart sank.) "Suse, did Hiram Green say 'twas a man or a woman had come to board with old Mrs. Morris?"

"He didn't say," called Suse from an inner room.

"Well, it's a lonely place to choose, isn't it?" said Andrew. "Good-night, Mr. Symmons."

hard field t
ready, but"—
to accept to
"Good-night, good-night. Thank you kindly,"
said old Sam.

The old mare was buried next day in one of
Sam's barren fields.

"Indeed, I
He's getting
asked as he encountered old Sam returning from
the obsequies with an earthy spade over his
rounding shoulders.

in the morning
that have you
"No, I didn't," said Sam.

ring, and we
plied Andrew
queried Mr. Horne.
"Did you save her tail to make a fly brush?"

"No," answered old Sam. "I never thought
of it."

"asked Sam
bending over. "Did you skin her?"

s a boarder
e anything
"No," said Sam, thoroughly humiliated.

Andrew, w
"Well," said Mr. Horne with exuberant sar-
casm, as he shook his reins over his team of
fat Clydesdales, "It's well you can afford such
waste. I couldn't."

t was a man
l Hiram Gre
come to board

from an inn

oose, isn't it
Symmons."

CHAPTER II.

"Say where

In upper air

Dost hope to find fulfilment of thy dream?

On what far peak seest thou a morning gleam?

Why shall the stars still blind thee unaware?

Why needst thou mount to sing?

Why seek the sun's fierce-tempered glow and glare?

Why shall a soulless impulse prompt thy wing?"

THE next day Andrew Cutler went to complete the sowing of the clearing. It was somewhat warm, but a chill, and he wore an old velveteen coat whose ribbed surface was sadly rubbed and faded to a dingy russet. More than that, it was burrowed through in several round spots by ashes from his pipes and cigars. As usual, Rufus followed him, and a very picturesque pair the two men were.

The air was very clear, the smoke from the village curling blue up high to the clouds. Now and then a shred of it lingering about the roof trees. In the distance could see some white pigeons flying about the church spire; and off to the right, where the river ran, he could see lines of white flashing for a moment in the sun, then falling beyond the horizon.

trees, and these he knew were flashes from the shining breasts and wings of the gulls. The ground had not yet lost the elasticity of spring, and the new grass had not yet quite overcome the dead growth of the year before.

It was a buoyant day, and Andrew was in a buoyant mood. He had not come out without the expectation of hearing more singing, and he promised himself he would not wait so long before beginning his search for the singer, whom he took to be the boarder at the Morris house. However, it seemed as if he was to be disappointed, for the sun grew strong, the air warm, and no music came to him.

His sowing was done, and he was just about leaving, when, sweet, clear, full, the voice of yesterday shook out a few high notes, and then it was but a moment when the words of a song began to sing it in such fashion that Andrew (who knew the Rufus following well) could hardly believe that the sound came from mortal lips—it was so flute-like, so like a bird's note from a bird.

Now, Andrew's life had not been one of much recreation; still, there were hours in it he did not care to dwell upon, and the memory of one of these unworthy hours suddenly came upon him with shame. They say that at the approach of winter one sees in a second all the

sins of his soul stand forth in crimson blazonry and perhaps, in that moment, Andrew's old self died.

The singer's voice had taken up another song one he did not know—

“ Out from yourself !
For your broken heart's rest ;
For the peace which you crave ;
For the end of your quest ;
For the love which can save ;
Come ! Come to me ! ”

In springing over the fence and making towards where the sound came from, Andrew hardly seemed as if acting upon his own volition. He had been summoned ; he went.

After all, there is not much mystery about a girl singing among the trees, yet Andrew's heart throbbed with something of that hush and tumult with which we approach some sacred shrine of feeling, or enter upon some new intense delight.

He soon saw her, standing with her back against a rough shell-bark hickory. The cloudy greyness of its rugged stem seemed to intensify the pallor and accentuate the delicacy of her face. For she was a very pale-faced, fragile-looking woman who stood there singing :

eyes were wide and wistful, but not unhappy-looking, only pitiable from the intense eagerness that seemed to have consumed her. And, in fact, she was like an overtuned instrument whose tense strings quiver continually.

She was clad in a dull red gown made in one of the quaint fashions which *la mode* has revived in late years. It had many *bizarre* broideries of blues and black, touched here and there with gold—Russian embroidery, its wearer would have called it. As she sang she made little dramatic gestures with slender hands, and at the last words of her song's refrain, she stretched forth her arms with a gesture expressing the infinitude of yearning.

Her face, so mobile as to be in itself speech, responded her words by an inarticulate but powerful plea. It was as though she pleaded with fate to manifest its decree at once, and not hold her longer in suspense. And it was for singing such as this, and for acting such as this, that the world had crowned her great—Fools who could not see that the head they crowned was already drooping beneath its lonely burden. And fools who could not see it was the passion of an empty heart, the yearning of a solitary soul, the unutterable longing of a woman's nature for love, that rendered her marvellous voice so

passionately and painfully sweet. She herself never suspected it; only she believed what the doctors had told her manager and teacher, the good man who wore such big diamonds and used such bad language that she must have received quiet, complete and absolute change. So she came and this man had come to Canada, and he had driven on and on into the heart of the country till they came to this village in the valley, and there she had elected to stay—a caprice nearly so extravagant, and certainly more sweet and wholesome than the freaks indulged in by some others of her ilk. So here she was, lying *perdu* whilst her picture was in every paper in the country, with marvellous tales of her triumphs abroad and whispers of the wonderful treat in store for the music-lovers of America. And her little, good-hearted manager flashed off his biggest diamonds, swore his worst oaths, hoped the child was getting strong, and never dreamed he was killing her.

The "Great God Pan" was all unconscious of his cruelty, was he not, when he fashioned the pipe out of a river reed? And as he blew through it the music of the gods, doubtless he had good reason for thinking that never before had been honoured like unto this reed.

There are moments in real life, so exotic

She herself hardly realizes the verity of them till long after, when the meaning of his own actions struggles through the mists and confronts him with their consequences. In such moments the most absurd things in the world seem quite in order, and the commonplace actions of life assume grotesque importance. So it is in dreams, which reconcile with magnificent disregard of possibilities, the most wonderful conditions of person, place and time. Well—

“Dreams are true whilst they last
And do we not live in dreams?”

This is Andrew's only excuse for accepting so promptly the musical invitation extended with such feeling!

“I have come,” he said, half dreamily—stepping out from the shelter of the trees.

The pale-faced singing siren changed to a startled, blushing girl, and in swift sequence Andrew's rapt gaze altered to one not altogether without daring.

“Oh, so I see,” she half gasped, then laughed outright, looking at him with shy eyes, but continuously curving lips. The laugh robbed the scene of its last illusion of mystery.

Andrew advanced, raising his old felt hat

with an instinct of deference that made the commonplace courtesy charming.

"I hope I didn't scare you," he said; "but I was working in a field near here yesterday and I heard you singing. To-day I made up my mind to find you. Do you mind?"

"Do you know who I am?" she asked.

"No," he answered; "but I suspect you are the 'Boarder up at old Mis' Morris's.'"

"Oh, so a rumour has gone abroad in the land? Yes, I am the boarder; one would think a boarder was a kind of animal."

"Yes," assented Andrew. "Old Sam Symmon said he wasn't sure if it was a man or a woman."

"I won't be called an 'It'; my name is Judith Moore."

"How do you do, Miss Judith Moore. My name is Andrew Cutler."

He had come close to her by this time, and as he looked down upon her he began to feel an irritating sense of shyness creep over him. She was such a fantastic little figure in his eyes. And what a queer frock she had on! Surely on any one else it would be horrid. It didn't look so bad on her, though; and what a belt forced her to wear, this great burden of metal—flexible band of silver with, it seemed to him, dozens of silver ornaments hanging to it by

chains of varying lengths! What nonsense! It seemed to weigh her down. (Andrew was not up in chatelaines.) Then her feet! But here his masculine horse sense and the instinct of protection which had awakened in him at the first startled look from her big wide eyes, made him overstep all polite bounds and render himself odious to Miss Moore.

"Why in the world do you wear shoes like these?" he asked. "And such stockings! and standing on that damp moss! You had better go right into the house and get on decently heavy shoes."

This was too much. Miss Judith Moore fancied her own feet, and fancied open-work socks, hose, and high-heeled wisps of shoes. Most of all, she liked the combination. In fact, in a harmless little way, she rather liked people to have a chance to appreciate these beauties, and at the very moment Andrew spoke, she had noted his downward glance and felt a righteous peace settle upon her. To be well shod is such moral support, and, lo, this heathen, this wretch, this abominable, conceited, brazen young farmer, had actually dared to suggest a change; more than that, he had spoken of "stockings"—distasteful!

So, with a dignity that reduced Andrew to

despair, even whilst it roused his ire (she was so slight to be such a "defiant little cat" he told himself), she drew herself up, in a manner to do the traditional Duchess credit, and left him saying:

"Since you don't approve of my feet I'll take them out of your way."

"You mean they'll take you," said Andrew wrathfully conscious that she was, to use a good old figure of speech, "turning up her nose at him."

"You are extremely rude," she called back.

"And you are a bad-tempered little thing," he answered.

So he and his siren, calling names at each other, parted for the first time.

Miss Moore went into the little apple orchard behind the Morris homestead, and watched a tiny chipmunk gathering leaves to line its nest—at least Judith supposed it was for that. At any rate, it picked up the dry brown leaves from beneath a maple tree near the gate, sat up on its hind legs, and pleated the leaf into its mouth deftly. It took two or three at a time, and looked very comical with the brown leaves sticking out like fans on each side of its face. She laughed so long and loudly at this, that Mrs. Morris came to the door to see if she had hysterics.

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"I met a young man in the woods, Mrs. Morris," said Judith, going up to her; "a rude, long-legged young man, named Cutler. Who is he?"

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"For the land's sake!" said Mrs. Morris. "Did you meet Andrew Cutler? I warrant he'd be took down if he heard you say that. He's thought a good deal of by some people, being on the school board and the council, for all he's unmarried and young; but he's too big feeling to suit me! And he don't profess religion, and is forever smokin' and shootin', and he's got a crank on books—took that off his mother; she was a Myers. They was U. E. Loyalist stock; got their farms for nothing, of course, and hung on to them. Andrew owns a fine place, and he's full of cranks about college farming. Well, 'long-legged'—that's a good one! He is long-legged, there's no mistake about that. All the Myerses are tall. There's Hannah Myers as keeps house for Andrew, and she's tall as my old man, and—for the land's sake, that milk's boiling over!" and Mrs. Morris departed indoors. Presently, out flew two chickens, a collie dog, and a cat, wild-eyed and spitting, from which Mrs. Morris diagnosed that Mrs. Morris had made "things" fly around when she got inside. A miracle she was an adept at performing.

Andrew went home to dinner, and came back in the afternoon to harrow down the grain he had sowed. Mr. Morris came out to talk to him.

"Who is the girl you've got boarding with you?" asked Andrew.

"Oh," said Mr. Morris, "I don't just rightly know, but she's a singing woman of some kind in the operry, she said. She and a little black a-vised chap came driving up the lane one day last week, and before I just rightly could make out what they were, he was driving off and she was there for keeps. Next day there came a whole waggon load of trunks. Going to stay all summer, she says. She's greatly took up with the country. She wanted to tie ribbons on the cows' horns, and is bound to learn to make butter. She was going to churn the other day, and worked the dash about a dozen times and then she scolded right sharp at the butter for not coming. Then she got a spoon and tasted the cream, and she up and says to Mother, 'Why Mrs. Morris, you've given me sour cream to churn!' and she was real huffy. She wouldn't believe that sweet butter came off sour cream and she just sat, and never took her eye off the churn till Mother was done with it. She was bound she wasn't going to be fooled. She's real

and came back to the grain house to talk to Mother. "I don't eat a bit of meat some ways, though, only she don't eat a white, and Mother's dreadful afraid her religion is a kind of heathenish. She was looking out the door the other day, and she says, says she, 'It's a perfect idol!' Mother never let on, but soon as she went away Mother came out and looked about, and there was nothing like an idol, except maybe them big queer-marked stones I got down by the lime springs. What did you call 'em?"

"Petrifactions," said Andrew.

"Yes. Well, Mother always had 'em set up against the door steps kind of tasty, but Mother ain't the one to have no sich temptations around in any one's way, if they be given to sich, so she just rolled 'em along and dropped 'em into the chertarn."

Mr. Morris was notoriously long-winded, and sometimes Andrew was not over-eager to encounter him, but this day Andrew was more than civil.

"What's she here for, anyhow?" asked he.

"Her health; she's all drug down, Mother says, and she's full of cranks. Yesterday she would weed in the garden, and she started out with as good a pair of gloves on as you ever seen. Well, she stayed and stayed, and Mother went out to see if she wanted to come in, because Mrs. Horne was there (them Hornes are

a bad lot!) and she wanted to visit a spell. Well she'd got up about *two* handfuls of chick-weed and then sat down and gone sound asleep. All wore out, Mother says."

After a bit Mr. Morris departed. He had detailed with great gusto all the "news" told by Mrs. Horne, or deduced by himself from her conversation; but Andrew's interest flagged, so presently Mr. Morris went on his way, if not rejoicing, at least relieved, for it was a boon to him to get a good listener.

Andrew went home reflectively. His last conscious thought that night must have been in some way relative to Miss Judith Moore, her feelings and her temper, for he muttered to himself, half sleeping, half waking: "Her eyes didn't look like the eyes of a bad-tempered girl;" then "They *were* so little I could have held both of them in one hand;" later still, "I was pretty bad to her about the shoes, women are such dear little fools." Then this judicially-minded young man slept the sleep of the just.

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CHAPTER III.

"If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget ;
If thou wouldst read a lesson, that will keep
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills ; no tears
Dim the sweet looks that nature wears."

THE village of Ovid lay in a valley hollowed
out of an otherwise level country into a shallow
basin. It called those who dwelt to the north
Mountain Hayseeds; and those to the
south of it, Swamp Angels—compliments re-
turned in kind, for the youths of the sections
flattered by Ovidian attention always
referred to the villagers as Ovid Idiots.

For the most part the houses in Ovid clus-
tered closely together. Some few of them were
scattered half way up the sloping hill-sides,
but these dwellings were all built facing the
village proper, and besides being absurdly fore-
warned always wore a deprecating look as if
consciously of their invidious positions.
These hills of Ovid were not very formidable,

and from a short distance off, say, from Andrew Cutler's clearing, one could see over their crests, the gables of the village.

There were but two long streets in the village, denominated the Front Street and the Back Street.

Upon the Front Street stood the two churches, facing each other, being, however, only in physical juxtaposition, for spiritually they were as far as the poles apart. The one was a Methodist Church, and bore high above its door the inscription, *Eva Methodist Church, A.D. 1854*. This legend must once have been very glaring, seemingly jet black upon a white surface, but some painter, well disposed to mankind evidently, had swept his brush laden with white paint over this inscription. The result was grateful to the eye, even if it did give rise to some uncertainty as to what the words actually were. Great truths often come home to one intuitively, perhaps that is how every one knew what to write above that door.

The Baptist Church was stone, and bore on its front a date, 1854 A.D., but it rejoiced in a tin-plate spire that glimmered gayly in the sunlight, and shone cold and chill beneath the wintry moon.

Between these two churches and the members thereof there was no animosity, but there was

from Andre "feeling." A "feeling" is one of those intangible, elusive things, of which no acceptable definition can be given; but every new-comer in the village of Ovid grew into that "feeling" before he had been there a week. Perhaps some perception of this peculiar condition may be gathered by considering the various improvements which took place in the two churches during one autumn in Ovid.

They were inaugurated by Hiram Green, who as a Methodist presented a stone tie-post to the Methodist Church. Hiram kept the village grocery store, and had accepted six stone tie-posts in lieu of cash for the main goods supplied to the boarding-house at Ovid. The boarding-house keeper had taken them in default of cash from his man boarders. Hiram erected three of these posts before his shop door, at such short distances from each other that it precluded the possibility of more than two horses at a time, and only to the end posts and facing each other. Having adorned the path before his shop with two others, he, at the instigation of his wife, presented the sixth to the Methodist Church. This post was adorned with an iron ball at the top and a somewhat frisky damsel in a long dress carving on the side. It was a matter of grave consideration whether

this carving should be turned to the street towards the sidewalk, it being debatable in which position she would do the most harm. She was finally turned towards the street upon the reasonable supposition that persons driving past would pass more swiftly than persons walking; hence, their exposure to evil would be briefer. To further mitigate the demoralizing effect of this bit of stonework Solomon Ware took a chisel and carefully obliterated the outlines of the figure, missing only one foot, which, in terpsichorean fashion, pointed skyward in a meaningless, disjointed way from a chaos of chisel marks.

The week following, the Baptists put up two wooden tie-posts, each surmounted by an iron horse's head.

Two weeks later a block of wooden stonework appeared beside the stone tie-post, to facilitate those driving to church in alighting from, or mounting to, their conveyances. This was done on Wednesday. By the Sunday following, its duplicate stood between the wooden tie-posts, with the additional glory of drab paint.

A month later a new fence encircled the Methodist temple, and the Baptist sanctuary was re-shingled.

As the autumn advanced the Methodist

the street church had sheds for its horses erected in the
debatable ear of the church. Ere the first snow flew, the
the most hard Baptist Church was similarly adorned, and its
s the street rejoiced in elaborate scroll work brackets
that person the dividing posts.

lightly than pe In November the Baptists held a series of
posure to ev revival meetings, and the Methodists commenced
mitigate the weekly service of song. At New Year's the
of stonework Methodists raised their pastor's salary fifty dol-
carefully obli is a year. In February the Baptists held a
e, missing on memorial service, and had four ministers preach
fashion, point on one Sunday. It is true, as Hester Green
nted way from k occasion to remark, that two of them were
y students, but the Baptist Church had vindic-
sts put up to ed the priority of its establishment, and
ted by an in ted on its laurels,—besides the spring work
e coming on.

wooden ste The speech of the Ovidians was not in any
ost, to facilit e a dialect peculiar to themselves. There
hting from, e, of course, certain words and phrases
This was hich were regular stand-bys, and from which
owing, its dup Ovidian speech was free. For example, when
tie-posts, w Ovidian was out of conversational matter, he
t. not let the talk die away, or the argument
encircled to pieces whilst waiting for the tardy ideas
otist/ sanctua his friends to evolve themselves. Far from it.
the Method simply said, in a tone suitable to the occasion,
ell, it beats all!" Closer scrutiny will reveal

the resources of this phrase. Did an Ovidian attend a funeral? Then this expression formed the chief staple of his conversation, and his enunciation ran the gamut of emotion, from grief to amazement. Did an Ovidian hear more than usually spicy piece of gossip? Then he ejaculated the same phrase in a tone of scandalized enjoyment. Was a subject upon which he could not, or would not, give a direct opinion under discussion? Then this non-committal formula answered admirably, entailing no after-responsibility upon the speaker, and yet giving him a pleasant sense of conversational duty properly performed.

There were a few idioms, also, dear to the Ovidian mind. To be "ambitious" meant simply to be energetic; to be "big feeling," "stuck up" or "toney," meant to be proud (in the sense of despising one's neighbours); to "conjure," with the accent strongly upon the first syllable, meant to think over a thing.

Apart, however, from a dozen or two of these lingual idiosyncrasies, the Ovidian speech was the ordinary English of Canadian rural districts delivered in a peculiar drawling, nasal style with a clinging to the last syllable of a word and the last word of a sentence. The only interest Ovidians had, apart from Ovid and the

an Ovidian session formed a part of the social life of the world, as shown by the trend of Canadian politics; and as Ovid they had always been with them, and the world only when the weekly papers came in, it was natural they should know Ovid best—and they did. Every one's pet hobby, every one's worst weakness, every one's ambition, every one's circumstances, everyone's antipathies, every one's preferences, every one's record and family record—all this was known and well known, aye, even to the third generation back. But of all Ovidians none knew so much of the fellows' history as did old Sam Symmons. The one attribute that assured Sam a welcome wherever he went, was his knowledge of the generation passed away, the fathers of the present Ovidians; not that his stories were flattering (far from it), but they were never ill-natured, at least upon Sam's part. It was true they were illustrative of the weak points of their heroes rather than their virtues, but then Sam did not make history; he only repeated it, and he was very impartial. So where a dozen Ovidians were gathered together, there Sam would be in the midst. There was a perilous stimulus about their participation. He was sure to evolve some personal reminiscence from the chaotic mass of his

old memories, and each of the expectant auditors felt that *his* forebears might be the subject of it. When Sam did choose a victim, and plunged into some old tale about his grandfather or father, then all the others drew in their breath with swift enjoyment of the various points of the story. There was something Druidical and bard-like in this oral handing down of history, and it differed from more pretentious history in one respect. Sam's stories might be often repeated, but he never altered a syllable, never deepened the shading to suit some different element in his audience, never swerved from the first intent of the recital, never slurred the truth to let any one off lightly. Perhaps the reason Sam's stories preserved their identity so well was because they were tacitly copyrighted; no one ever tried to tell them but himself, and indeed they would not have sounded the same from other lips, for Sam spoke of the past as one having authority.

The loss of his old mare was quite a serious one to Sam, and he went about a shade more irresolute than he was before. Poor old Sam! He had had so many blows, big and little, from fate, that it is not to be wondered at if he had become a little haphazard in his methods of work and business.

It is hardly worth while making plans when the evil chance seems to thwart them every day; even if one works till his stiff old limbs tremble with fatigue, it doesn't seem to make much headway against adverse circumstances; and when fate buffets down even the strongest guard, how can one poor old man fend off its blows? But if his brave old heart was shaken a little within him, Sam still turned a resolute face to the foe. The week after the mare's death, and before he had got used to the new horse he had bought to replace her, he found his way to Hiram Green's store.

The talk turned on drinking.

"Yes," said Sam, "there's many a way of drinking"—in a reminiscent tone—"many a way! When I was young, there were three brothers with their three wives, doing settlement duty on a grant of land given one of the officers, in Bruce County. Well, they were fine big fellows, and their wives were big, strapping, healthy women. Strong, too, they were, and had good judgment. Why, one of them went one morning to the wood-pile to get some wood, and when he came back there was a wolf, lean and hungry (or it had been a bitter winter), standing over the cradle where her baby lay. Now, what did he do? Run away and yowl? Not she. Hit

it a clip with a billet of wood, and killed where it stood. Well, the lads used to drive forty miles with an ox team for provisions, and each would bring his keg of rye back with him but the women always drank more than their share, and it got to be that there was mostly no meals ready when the lads got back from felling the timber. So the lads hit on the plan of tying the kegs to the roof, where the women could not get at them, and they went away well pleased with themselves. But they were finely taken down when they got back, for the women shot holes in the kegs, and caught the whiskey in a washtub. Yes, yes, there's many a way of drinking. There was your wife's grand-uncle now"—suddenly becoming personal in his memory, and addressing Hiram—" 'twas when he was running for reeve the first time, and he came into Fossil's tavern, and not seeing James I-w-son, the younger, and me, where we sat on the settle by the door, he went up to the bar to get a drink. He called for whiskey. He had his drink and laid down the five cents to pay for it. Now, 'twas his way to fill his glass very full, and Fossil, being a close man, was very grouchy at that. So, out of the five cents, he pushed back a penny. 'Here,' says he, 'is your change, Mr. Mowbray. I don't charge as much

and killed wholesale as I do for single drinks.' Your wife's grand-uncle did not like that. 'Twas just before the polling day when he got overtaken in liquor one night at old Squire Fraser's. 'Twas a bright moonlight night, and some of the lads being home late, also, heard a noise at the village pump, which, coming at, they saw was your wife's grand-uncle, pulling at the pump-handle, and saying, with many oaths, 'Come home, Jack; come home. There will be a sore broil with thee if Mrs. Mowbray see thee. Come home, Jack; come home.' To which persuasion he put many threats and moral advisements to Jack to abstain from liquor. Jack was his nephew, a quiet youth, being bred to the pulpit. Well, the boys held of both these tales, and when the voting came on, they would seize at anything, a post, or the fence, when your wife's grand-uncle came by, and, straining at it manfully, would beseech Jack to come home, using many general persuasions and many oaths also, as he had done to the pump, and feigning to weep sore for the stubbornness of Jack's heart. Then they would say, 'Come home, Jack, and I'll buy thee a drink wholesale at good, generous Master Basil's.' Yes, yes" — Sam's voice began to be taken—"yes, there's many a way of drinking." There was a pause. No one ever commented

upon Sam's stories; there was no need. To deprecate them would be to stir up, who knew what, of oblique reflection upon one's ancestors. For any of those not immediately interested to interfere would be to invite Sam's attention to their cases.

"Did you hear that the school-teacher leaves next week?" asked Hiram.

"No. Why?" asked Jack Mackinnon, glad of a chance of hearing his own voice.

"Because he says he can't afford to keep himself here and his wife in Toronto on the hundred a year."

"Then he'd better get," said old Mrs. Slick, she took the packet of cream of tartar Hiram was weighing. "He'd better get." She hobbled out, giving malevolent sniffs at the thought of the teacher's extravagant ideas.

"Yes, he's going," continued Hiram. "He's going, and there's a school meeting to-morrow."

Andrew Cutler, Hiram Green and Ben Braddock were school trustees, and it had occurred to each of them that Sam Symmons' Suse would be sure to apply for the position. She held a county certificate permitting her to teach for three years.

"I wonder," Andrew said that morning to his aunt, Miss Hannah Myers, "I wonder if Sam will know enough to apply for the place."

no need. "Not she! too empty-headed," said Miss Myers, briskly. "I'll go down this afternoon and tell her what I think of her, and make her apply." "Do," said Andrew, heartily.

Andrew liked old Sam, and he was a special favourite of the old man's. Many a long story of election fights and tricks, secrets Sam kept even from his wife, of how votes had been gained and lost, of many tales of drinking bouts and more gallant adventures, did old Sam retell for Andrew's benefit.

Andrew was not at all worried by Miss Myers' brusqueness of speech. He knew how kind she was to everybody in her own vinegary way. Mrs. Slick, tall, angular, hatchet-faced and sharp-tongued, tartar Hiram, and even old Sam, all of them, she hobbled. She hobbled. Hannah Myers had a heart full of love for every creature that needed help, only, 'the beggar at her door had first abuse and then a helping hand.'

Hiram. "Hiram." And how well the tramps knew the way up to that quaint old kitchen door, with the uneven flag-stones set in a little court-yard round it! The table always covered with glistening tin milk-pails stood outside, and many a good meal had been served to the gentlemen of the road had off that table; and they were served vigorously by Miss Myers whilst they listened to the tirade only interrupted by sudden questions she made to find perhaps a pair of shoes for the place."

socks, a shirt, or something else she saw they needed; now and then a surly tramp would answer her back, and she would laugh at him in her grim way and say, "Hear the man! Why, don't you see, I like to scold as much as you like to eat; so if you enjoy the one, why mayn't I the other?" Upon one memorable occasion an ungrateful tramp (and however much he may be idealized nowadays, there are instances of the ingratitude of tramps) attempted to impose upon her, thinking her alone. He had, unfortunately for him, reckoned without his host. Andrew suddenly appeared upon the scene, seized his trampship by the most convenient portion of his attire, and dropped him with quiet, but forcible, precision into a somewhat unappetizing duck pond nearby, giving him at the same time a picturesque but somewhat profane, bit of advice. The fellow took himself off, and Andrew turned his attention to poor Miss Hannah, who was quivering and trembling and crying as the meekest and mildest woman might do. Miss Myers' tongue was a deception, and, as a matter of fact, that and her vinegary aspect were the only defences she had against imposition, for whilst always vaunting her hard-heartedness, she was, in reality, the most gullible of women.

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She never could resist a pedlar; she always bought their trashy wares. And once, she never forgot it, she burdened herself with a lot of cheap brassy hairpins and extraordinary glass breast pins. That purchase fairly haunted her. To get rid of it she couldn't. Did she try to burn it? Some one came and caught her. Did she intend to throw it away? She did not dare, she knew some one would find it. She did manage finally to find a watery hiding-place for it in the horse pond. Even then its meretricious sparkle assailed her from the mud when the pond went dry. She related this to Judith Moore, and told her with all soberness that she could always pity a murderer trying to get rid of the corpse.

As Mrs. Morris had told Judith, Miss Myers was of U. E. Loyalist stock. She might have added that the Cutlers were also. Both families had been given grants of land in Canada. The property in the Myers family had been divided and sub-divided amongst a big family connection. Miss Myers had a little fifty-acre farm as her share of it; it lay some fifteen miles from Ovid.

Andrew's farm at Ovid had descended to him through his father and grandfather, old Captain Cutler, the stern old fighter whose sword, with

its woven crimson sash, hung in the hall of Andrew's house, with some quaint old pistol and a clumsy musket, relics from Canadian battle fields. Besides the property in Ovid Andrew owned another fine farm and a wide stretch of woodland in Muskoka. These properties accrued to him through the death of some of his father's relatives. So Andrew was very well off, in a modest way. The Muskoka property bore much fine timber, and an enthusiastic "prospector" assailed Andrew, month in and month out, with tales of the "indications" of minerals he had found beneath the ferns and mosses of his Muskoka woods. But Andrew was content with them as they were, with the trees growing solemnly upward, aspiring to the blue; the wandering streams, a network of silver tracery starred here and there by broad discs where they widened to a little placid lake or where two or more streams, meeting, gushed together. The sound of their soft confluence and the sighing of the wind, that without moving the leaves seemed ever to sigh between the tree trunks, blended into a soft sensation, half sound, half stillness, something perceived nowhere but in the woods, seeming indeed as if there we were very close to Nature's sweet and beautiful breast, hearing in this mysterious pulsation the beating of her kindly heart.

the hall of old pistols, a Canadian in Ovid and a wide these proper of some as very we property bon astic "pro and mont minerals losses of h content with es growing blue; the

Andrew had grown to be in very close touch with Nature during many solitary weeks spent hunting; in long tramps through the Muskoka woods, shooting the fawn-coloured deers, and the wild fowl that nested in the tiny lakes; and in many a long night when he lay *perdu* watching the lynx, forgetting his quest in the marvel of the stars, or in wakeful watches, seeing the sinuous camp-fire die down to embers and hearing the shrill laughing of the loon, the weird wail of the lynx, the cry of the great owl or the call of the coon. Andrew was past-master of all woodland lore. He had hunted Muskoka through and through. Many a wild duck's breast and a bear's mask, and many a pair of antlers proved his prowess.

Besides, he had spent many a winter in northern Quebec, snow-shoeing over its silent white wastes upon the traces of moose; the intense cold parching his throat, his half-breed guide padding* along at his side; sometimes sitting royally upon juicy steaks and birds, broiled as only hunters can broil—not scorched, but savoured with fire; sometimes upon a long trail with a bit of frozen bacon in one pocket

"Padding" is a term applied by hunters to the silent footed gait of Indian guides.

and a lump of frozen bread in the other, gnawing a morsel off each with care, so that he might not break off his moustache which was frozen in a solid mass with the moisture of his breath.

Andrew often heard people say that one did not feel the intense cold in these northern regions; he always longed to have them there and let them try it. He had felt pretty cold up there, only he never remembered the time when he couldn't hold his gun with his naked hands. That, though, as every one knows, is the mark of a mighty Nimrod. So soon as his half-breed guide discovered this, he grunted out a guttural prophecy that the shoot would be good.

Strange mixtures these guides were; the combination of French suavity and redskin cunning being a continual wonder to Andrew, accustomed as he was to less complex types.

This man who slept sometimes rolled close to the same blankets with him for warmth, whose woodcraft made his less intuitive knowledge seem absolute ignorance, whose judgment in matters of the chase was almost flawless, whose strength and agility would not have shamed a Greek—this man cooked his meat, washed the dishes, waited upon him deferentially and was not to be persuaded to eat at the same time. In the chase, a hero; in the camp, a slave.

ther, gnawed at his might. What tramps those were through the silent
at he might.itudes of these untrodden woods! What
was frozen moments had been his, when, leaving his guide
his breath preparing the camp for the night, Andrew had
y that onained some high ridge, and pausing, looked far
these northross the peaks of graduated hills, clad in
have theombre cedars weighted down with snow, white,
felt prettent, yet instinct with that mystery which
umbered theesses upon us pleading for elucidation, and
gun wither so strongly as when we are alone with
every one the unblotted world before us, away from the
Nimrod. Sins of man's desecration. There is something
ered this, ery pitiful in that mute appeal of nature to be
at the shoerderstood—like some sweet woman, smitten
o a spell of suffering silence, till such time as
were; the magic word shall release her. A word she
and redskows, yet cannot, of her own power, speak.
to Andrew hat magical mysteries shall not be revealed
ex types. hen speech is restored to her! And how her
elled close s plead and accuse at once! Of a verity,
rmth, who ying ears we hear not; truly, having eyes to
e knowledge yet are we blind!
Judgment For there is some great open secret surely in
ost flawless universe, that being deciphered will set all
ld not ha jangling dreams in chime. It is about us,
ed his mea und us, above us; the tiniest leaf tells it, the
differentialrs of heaven proclaim it, the water manifests
at the sam and the earth declares it, and yet we do not
camp, a slat

see it. When we do, it will be some simple vital principle that we have breathed with the breath of our lips, and handled with the familiar fingers of the flesh. We will be so unable to conceive of the world moving on in ignorance of it, that all the wisdom of the ages past will seem but as the howling of wolves in waste places, or at best as the babbling of children that play with diamonds, now letting it slip through their fingers leaving them with empty hands, now getting it in their eyes to torture them, or treading on it with vague discomfort and unease.

We have all seen these childish puzzles with their hidden faces concealed in the traceries. How hard it is to find these faces, although we know they are there! And yet, when found, it is impossible to see anything else in the picture. They obtrude themselves upon us, and what was formerly the picture becomes now only the background for what at first it completely concealed. So everything will but subserve to show us how palpable the great Central Truth has always been if we could but find it, *and so one will*. So let us go on bravely, each resolving "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." There is indeed within us some spark of the Divine Fire. Let it but once flame fairly, and we shall be gods indeed, moving in the glory of our own transfiguration.

There is no destiny too great for man.

The northern stars are very clear and cold, the northern skies are very blue and chill, the snowy plains are places meant for thought, and the silence of those scenes the soul awakes.

Andrew bore away with him some reflex of his austerity and intensity, which tempered his mind as the steel is strengthened.

His mother's story had been a sad one. She was Miss Myers' elder sister—Isabella Myers; very like Miss Myers yet very unlike; with those resemblances which pronounce two near kin, yet all those variations of the type which constitute the difference between beauty and every-day flesh and blood.

Isabella had been engaged to a minister's son named Harkness. He was a young man who embodied in every respect the many pleasing proportions about ministers' sons; yet, in spite of all, he had a real heart, a handsome form and face, a tender touch, and a personal magnetism that enabled him to wring an unwilling consent out of stern old Abraham Myers to his betrothal with his daughter Isabella.

These two young folk worshipped each other, and the wedding day was set. Isabella was to wear a white taffeta frock and white thread stockings. But troublous times had come to Canada.

Young Harkness went to the war. Isabella and he had a sad, sad parting, for the imaginative girl was fey of her fate, and clung to him till his heart melted within him. And as he rode away with a long tress of her dark hair on his breast it was not the sunshine alone that made his eyes so bright and his vision so uncertain.

It was but a puny affray that in the history of the world's wars, but it does not take but battles to make men brave and women's hearts ache. The dark braid had hardly warmed its place before it was soaked with the blood of the heart on which it lay. The real Isabella Myers died then, too. But a pale apathetic woman in her shape and semblance still went wearily on her way.

Ten years later they married her to Andrew Cutler, a man considerably older than herself and as her father said, "of the old true blood stock." She gave him a boy and died, well, of the world. Miss Hannah Myers came to keep house for her brother-in-law. She brought the baby and took charge of the little hidden chest which was full of the books ("poetical books and such," Miss Myers called them) that young Harkness had given Isabella long before. Andrew Cutler lived on after his wife's death, a good old age, being killed at last by falling

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rough the trap-door in his hay-loft. Then
Andrew was head of his house.

As Andrew grew up, he developed such a
range resemblance to one long dead, that
sometimes, when a movement, gesture, or ex-
pression of his brought it more clearly to Miss
Meyers' eyes, she felt an eerie thrill creep over
her. She described the sensation as "cold
chills." For it was not a resemblance to his
mother, or his grandfather, or even to his mother
(though he resembled her, too), but he imaged
with the brave, handsome, devil-may-care lover
of his mother's girlhood, he who had died ten
years before Andrew's birth. Surely the image
of that long-lost lover had been deeply graven
on that broken heart.

"The Cutler house on the hill," as the vil-
lagers described it, was quite a pretentious one
in its way. Old Captain Cutler, he of the sword
and sash, had not been penniless, by any means,
when he left the United States, although he
left behind him much valuable property. So
when the Canadian Government made him a
generous grant, he promptly spent his money in
building a house. Now, the forebears of this
Captain Cutler had come from England, and
many a tale his grandfather had told him of the
farm homestead there, of the garden with

brick-paven walks, and brick-built walls upon which grew the espaliered fruit, of the old sundial beside the larch tree, and the oaken beams that traversed the plaster of the ceilings, of the flagged kitchen, and the big fire-places. So here on the hill-top overlooking the valley where later Ovid was to be built, Captain Cutler erected his house, a big stone one with oak floors, stairways and doors, with heavy rafters of the same sturdy growth, a wide-flagged kitchen, and a hall sheathed in wood half way to the roof, with huge open fire-places. He put a brick wall about his gardens, and overtrained the sprawling branches of currant bushes—red ones, and white and black. Later on, hop vines had been planted here and there along the wall; still later, a row of grape vines had superseded them, and clad the old brick with fresh festoons of leaves. This made, when the grapes were ripe, a beautiful Bacchanal arabesque of purple fruit and brown stems twisted tendril and green leaf.

He laid down narrow brick walks, too, and then planted horse-chestnut trees. He put a sundial up, a grey stone column with a round top, whereon was rudely carven the symbols of the hours and a lob-sided hour-glass; for lack of a larch tree he filched a linden from the hill-side.

walls upon the old sun-baked benches farthest from Ovid. The hill-side next the village was laden with lindens, which in spring were covered in blossom. Old Captain Cutler went to England for English ox-heart cherry trees, and for boxwood, and for hawthorns to plant with oak-leaved hedges.

The heavy rafters of the cherry trees flourished and perpetuated themselves in generations of younger trees, the old half-wild box grew and multiplied, but the hawthorn hedges were failures. All that remained of them was a few scattered hawthorns that had long outgrown the status of the hedge row, and become old gnarled trees.

Miss Myers was very proud of her flower garden, which was a mass of circular, oval and diamond-shaped flower beds, bordered by box, spaced off by narrow bricked walks. There were honeysuckles growing over old-fashioned wooden trellises; and roses, crown imperials and common lilies; huge clumps of pæonies, pink, white and the common crimson; clove pinks and thyme; lilies of the valley and violets, with bushes of rosemary and patches of balm; spotted tiger lilies, and a fragrant white lily called the day lily; little shrubs of the pink-flowering almond, "snow on the mountain,"

"mist on the hill" and acacia shrubs. And beside these, many more old-fashioned perennial plants, like queen of the meadow and thrift; and every summer Andrew brought her heliotrope and scented geraniums, and mignonette from town.

The barns were away down at the foot of the hill. Andrew's men usually all lived in the village, unless he happened to have hired strangers for the stress of harvest or haying, or in winter time when they were needed about the house.

Miss Myers, as the village phrased it, "kept help regular," and often had up old Mrs. Green from the village, for there was a deal of work to be done in that house.

For the rest, Andrew was a practical farmer; it had not occurred to him that he did not need to work so hard, and the active life did him no harm. He was up at daylight in summer, and by candle-light in winter.

He ploughed, sowed, reaped and threshed his grain. And when at the threshings he sat at the head of the long table, lined on each side with men "feeding like horses, when you hear them feed," he looked like some young chief among his serfs, albeit he wore blue jeans and flannel shirts as they did.

He did not know himself to be so different from his neighbours as he was, only he never seemed to contemplate marrying one of their women, and he pitied them. For they did not recognize the pathos of their own narrow lives. They did not see their surroundings as he did—the beauties of the skies above, and of the earth beneath, and the marvel and mystery of the water.

Andrew could not have said this was what made him pity them, for he was one of the articulate ones, whose speech is shackled; one of those, too, who know their own limitations in this way, and feel their fetters. At times they seemed to weigh his spirit down.

CHAPTER IV.

ANDREW was eager to see Miss Moore again, although he felt a masculine irritation against her for taking umbrage at well-meant and thoroughly sensible advice. Perhaps at the bottom of this there lay a *soupçon* of annoyance with himself, that he had spoken abruptly to her upon the subject, mingled with a compassionate remembrance of what Mrs. Morris had told him of her delicacy. He was very glad to find an excuse to go up to the woods, where they stretched past the Morris house; and a pretence that he was looking for suitable trees to cut down for foundations for his hay-stacks, justified him in his own eyes for strolling among his trees in very leisurely, but apparently disinterested fashion. He must, however, have been paying some attention to the house on his right, for when Mrs. Morris ran from the old orchard behind the house to the barns, calling, "Father, Father, where are you? Come here, quick, do, hey Father!" Andrew promptly responded, leaping over the fence and speedily reaching her side.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"Land of love! But I'm glad you've come, if he did call you long-legged; all the better for her now if you be. I hope she ain't fell by this time. Wonder where Father is. I never seen such a man; always gone when he's wanted. I declare it beats me where he gets to. It's enough to drive—"

"What is it, Mrs. Morris?" demanded Andrew, his heart misgiving him. "Can't I help?"

"Deed you can! And to think of her calling you long-legged, and the very next day having to depend on you for her life, may be, or to save one of her own legs being broke—"

Mrs. Morris got no further. A little faint cry struck Andrew's ears, coming from the direction of the orchard.

"For heaven's sake, come on, and show me what's wrong," he cried. "Don't stand there shivering."

"Why, sakes alive! Don't you know? Miss Moore got up in a tree and—"

But by this time they were in the orchard. A glance explained the situation to Andrew.

High up on an apple-tree branch stood Miss Moore, clinging with both arms round a limb above her, her face white as death, her eyes dilated with fear. A ladder's head was within

six inches of her feet. Andrew was up it in an instant. He knew the trouble. Only last year a hired man of his had ascended a tree to pick fruit. He was seized with this ague of dizzy fear, and flinging himself against a stout limb had held on like grim death. It took two men to get him down; his terror made him clasp the tree convulsively. It was days before he was well again.

Miss Moore had evidently not seen him, nor heard his coming. As he slipped his arms about her, she gave a great start, and turned to look at him with eyes which seemed to expect some tangible shape of horror, evolved out of her illogical and intangible fear.

When she saw who it was, her eyes filled and her lips trembled.

"Oh, take me down. Do take me down."

"Yes, indeed, I will," said Andrew, with quiet assurance. "Let go of the branch."

She shuddered. The spell of the vertigo was yet upon her. Her arms tightened upon the bough.

"Do take me down," she pleaded childishly. "I'm frightened."

"My dear, you must loose your hold," said Andrew, steadily.

Then, with one arm about her, he reached to

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ad one by one undid the clinging fingers, gathering them into his palm as he did so. With a force that seemed cruel, he pulled down the slender wrist and placed her hand upon his shoulder. Her face expressed the agony of dizziness. With blind instinct she put her other arm about his neck and clasped it close. He felt her form relax, and braced himself in time to sustain her head weight as she fainted.

The descent of the ladder was easy enough. Andrew had carried many a bag of wheat up and down his steep granary stairs. The principle of balancing an inert woman is much the same. He carried her into the house and laid her down upon the broad home-made couch, covered with dark brown calico, that stood in the kitchen. Mrs. Morris had talked volubly during these proceedings, but only after he laid Judith down, did Andrew begin to hear what she was saying.

"She does look gashly!" said Mrs. Morris. "Whatever would I do if she was to be took! And this minute she looks fit for laying out."

"Goodness alive," said Andrew. "Can't you do anything to bring her to? Bathe her face, or something?"

Mrs. Morris flew for water and brought it, trembling. "I say, Andrew, can't you do it?"

I'm so shook—I never could bear to touch corpses, and—”

Andrew gave her a venomous look, dipped his handkerchief in the water, and began clumsily to bathe the girl's brow. Her senses were already reasserting themselves. She put up her hands to her face; they fluttered nervously. Andrew caught one of them and held it between his own brown ones, noting that her wrists were red almost bruised, creased in rough outline of the apple-tree's bark.

“Will you give me some water?” she asked.

Mrs. Morris brought a blue and white cup. Andrew, kneeling on the braided mat before the couch, slipped his arm under Judith and put the cup to her lips. She took a mouthful, and fell into a shivering fit of cold.

Mrs. Morris rose to this emergency. Agnes was an old familiar friend; “shakes” had no terrors for her. In a moment she had found a thick coverlet and placed it over Judith.

“You stay by her,” she said to Andrew, “and I'll make her a draught of hot elderberry syrup in two shakes.”

Then she was off to the lean-to kitchen, and they heard her rattling among her kettles. Andrew still knelt upon the mat holding Judith's hand with praiseworthy absent-mindedness.

"Are you better now?" he asked.

"Yes," she said, her chin quivering as she tried to keep her teeth from chattering. "It was so good of you to take me down. So awfully good. I'm very stupid, but I couldn't help it."

"Of course you couldn't. I had a man who behaved much worse than you did in the same situation. Ever so much. Indeed, you behaved very well."

There was silence; then Judith began: "Mr. Butler, I—er—called you a name to Mrs. Morris the other day."

"Did you? What did you call me?"

"Will you forgive me?"

"Tell me what you called me first."

"Oh!"

"Forgiveness is worth that, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes. I called you—long-legged, and—think, I said you were rude."

Andrew suppressed an inclination to laugh, being minded not to belittle the value of his resolution.

"Well," he said, "I'll forgive the first part of because you see it's so awfully true, and as for the second, well—I think you meant 'sensible'; anyhow, I forgive you for it all."

Miss Moore experienced a mental sensation she would have called "curling up." A pretty

cool specimen, this young farmer! She had thought he would have fallen into faltering excuses. She was really ill, though faint—cold.

Mrs. Morris came in with the steaming cup of black syrup. Judith had forgotten till that moment that Andrew held her hand; of course Andrew had been unconscious of it all along. But as Mrs. Morris appeared in the door a swift intuition of the state of affairs came to Judith. She gave a little gesture of withdrawal, and Andrew released her fingers slowly, rising with praiseworthy calmness to get himself a chair.

While Judith tried to drink the hot syrup Mrs. Morris explained that Miss Moore had never seen a bird's nest with eggs in it, and there being an oriole's nest in the apple-tree, "Father" had put up the ladder for her to see it, and—Andrew knew the rest.

"Tree fright is a lot worse than stage fright," said Miss Moore; oracularly, but this was a dead saying to both her listeners. Mrs. Morris talked and talked. Miss Moore had long since lain back on the big brown pillow; her face was flushed, her eyes sleepy. Andrew would have listened to Mrs. Morris forever, provided he could have watched Miss Moore at the same time. But at length Mrs. Morris rose and moved towards her summer kitchen, intimating that

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er chores needed tending to, so Andrew perforce had to take his leave.

"Good-bye, just now," he said. "May I come back and take you to see some birds' nests nearer the ground?"

"Oh, do," she said. "And I haven't thanked you half enough for helping me to-day."

"Indeed you have. Good-bye, just now."

"Good-bye," she said softly.

He was just at the door, when a soft but interrogative "Ahem" from the couch attracted his attention. He turned. Miss Judith Moore did not look at him, but with cautious precision drew the dark blue coverlet up a tiny bit. Her eyes became riveted upon the point of a bronze slipper that gradually grew from the shadow of the covering until a whole foot was revealed—a foot at a defiant pose and wearing a little bronze slipper with an exaggeratedly high heel. Andrew's eyes grew daring, and he turned.

Miss Moore seemed to telescope, for head and shoulders disappeared beneath the coverlet at once. She paused a moment, and then departed. As he went across the fields he thought of the scene he had left, and, more shame to him, his thoughts were not concerned wholly with the effects of wearing high heels, nor yet of the

impropriety of Miss Moore's retaliation for her high and mighty granting of forgiveness. Indeed, as he sat for a moment kicking his heels on the top bar of the first fence, he was speculating solely as to whether "they" were open work or not! He was thinking he would have given his best gun to be able to tell, and summed up his reflections with a dissatisfied little growl. "Of all the mean, miserable, stingy glimpses!"

As he walked along, his face changed. After climbing the hill-side to his garden wall, he passed an apple-tree in full bloom at the gate. He paused beneath it. His face was pale and serious, his eyes tender. He thought of Judith's russet head as it had leaned upon his shoulder, he looked down at his old velvet coat, where it had rested, and fancied some vague perfume rising from it to his face. He remembered he had held her in his arms, and recalled the red marks upon her delicate wrists. Those wrists had been curved about his neck.

He could not realize the full height and depth of what had come to him, but his whole being groped for the truth even as he stood beneath the tree.

As he walked slowly up the narrow brick walk to the house, he noticed how the chestnut roots and the frost together had heaved up

rick's and rendered the walk irregular. He wondered anxiously if she could walk over it in those shoes, and as he reached his door, which stood open under its old-fashioned porch, revealing a dusky cool vista beyond, he suddenly saw, as in a vision, a woman's shape stand between the lintels, waiting for him!—a woman with tender hands outstretched in welcome, grave grey eyes, soft hair, tender lips; the woman he loved; *his own*. As this last thought, the sweetest thought man's heart holds, formulated itself in his mind, Andrew knew the truth. He turned down the path, past the apple-tree, through the meadows again, and across his fields, until once more he looked upon the house wherein she rested. He looked at it long from the shelter of his trees, his whole existence resolved into a chaos of uncertain self-communings, until a voice like an angel's seemed to whisper of comfort and to sing of hope.

Then he went home, and at four o'clock betook himself to the school-house to attend the meeting in regard to appointing a new teacher. The village school-house stood at the end of the street farthest away from the Cutler homestead. It was a bleak, stone building, with a wooden porch—a gaunt, bare, uninviting-looking building, with none of those picturesque adjuncts

of climbing vines and overarching trees, associated so often with thoughts of a country school.

It had a perky, self-satisfied little bell-house on top, and its date, 1865, was rudely carved on a big stone in the peak of the north gable. It had eight windows—three at each side, two at one end. In winter, the wood for the box stove was always piled up outside before these. There were always complaints of the school-house being dark in winter, yet it never occurred to any one to select a different site for the wood pile.

The interior of the school-house corresponded in dinginess to the outside. The plaster walls were sadly soiled, particularly beneath the box window seats, where the children sat kicking their heels whilst they ate their lunches at noon. For the scholars were drawn principally from the outlying farm-houses. A long length of irregularly jointed pipes led the smoke from the box stove at the end to an exit over the teacher's desk. Little tin pails were hung at intervals along this, to catch the black liquid distilled from the soot. The other adornments of the room consisted of a long blackboard, a globe, and some big lettered tablets, round which the teacher was wont to gather the infant class to teach them their letters.

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In the politics of a little village like Ovid, the smallest public measures became magnified to grotesque importance. The usual custom was for the school trustees to sit in private session at, when any particular business was to be arranged, say, the selection of a teacher, and when this was arranged the doors were flung wide and the meeting was "open." These open school meetings were always well attended. They were the classes in which embryotic statesmen acquired the political alphabet, the A B C of political procedure, the manner of putting a motion, taking a vote, making a nomination, and the correct order of precedence governing motions and amendments. There too, was required the first great requisite of a politician, the art of saying non-committal things in a most convincing tone of voice, and of treating with much politeness those whom one held in secret abhorrence.

There were two offices, those of school trustee and pathmaster, and these two were equal in power and glory. True, they were barren honours, but they oftentimes led to better things. The school trustee had the higher position in one respect; he was chosen by the people at first hand. The pathmaster, upon the contrary, was appointed by the Council. It is

needless to say the school trustee smiled in calm superiority at the pathmaster, and the latter in turn felt the making of the roads wherein the whole community walked, was as holy an office as the task of guiding the juvenile wanderers into the school, and seeing that when there, they trod the common road to knowledge, it being well known that there is no royal road thereto.

When Andrew arrived at the school-house the other two trustees, Hiram Green who kept the village store, and Hen Braddon, were present. They immediately entered upon a discussion of the teacher question. The application of Sam Symmons' Suse lay upon the table, written out upon foolscap paper, in big round hand, with many flourishing capitals, rejoicing in "shaded" heads and beautifully involved tails.

"I tell you Suse is a good fist with a pen," said Hen Braddon, with conviction, and the other two agreed. "She ain't no slouch at spelling either," said Hiram Green. The other two agreed with this also. Then Andrew took up his parable.

"Yes," he said, "Suse is quite smart, and being bred right here in Ovid seems to give her a claim to the school. I suggest we just appoint her."

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Andrew, with solicitude. "I hope she pays you

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oman, don't you think you could fix it so's

he'd chop the wood for winter? That would

ve twelve dollars."

"Well, it's as well to be cautious," said Hiram Green.

"It'll save advertising," said Hen Braddon.

"Suppose we just decide on it then," said Andrew.

"Well," said Hiram Green, "well, I ain't got no objections to Suse *as* Suse, but what I think two hundred and fifty is enough to pay a woman for what a man got three hundred."

Andrew sneered. He didn't have a sweet expression when he did that.

"Don't you think," he said, gravely—"don't you think Suse might include cleaning the school-house and lighting the fires in winter for the two-fifty, being she's a woman?"

"No," said Hiram, reflectively; "old Mrs. Slick has done it so long."

"But it would save twenty-five dollars," argued Andrew, with meek persuasion.

"Well," said Hiram, "Mrs. Slick needs that. She's owin' already, and she might's well draw the money off the school taxes as off the council."

"Oh, Mrs. Slick is owing, is she?" queried Andrew, with solicitude. "I hope she pays you right. Well, about Suse. Being she's a woman, don't you think you could fix it so's he'd chop the wood for winter? That would be twelve dollars."

A nasty red flickered up to Hiram's face. He had thought Andrew's proposition about the taking care of the school thoroughly genuine.

"Oh," he said, "I ain't particular whether she gets the three hundred or the two-fifty, though I hope you won't deny when nomination comes round that you deliberately threw away fifty dollars of the people's money."

"You may be quite sure I won't deny anything that's true," said Andrew, hotly. "And as for throwing away the people's money, well—some of the teachers, so far as I can recollect, got their salaries raised pretty frequently. Of course, I wasn't on the School Board then, so I only *heard* why it was done. I can't say of my own knowledge."

The fact was that Mr. Hiram Green had several unappetizing daughters, and, as he had been school trustee almost ever since any one remembered, it seemed good in his sight that the teachers, over whom he wielded such paternal authority in such a parental way, should return the compliment by adopting a filial rôle and become sons not only in spirit but in name. But, alas, for the vanity of human wishes! the perfidious teachers had accepted all Hiram's kindness, had slept in the best bedroom and partaken of his best fruit, had ridden by him to

own and accompanied the Misses Green to tea-meetings and festivals, had abode in the Green household over Sundays, had gone with them to church, and at choir practice had faithfully served them, and then, with the extra money they had been able to save through Hiram's hospitality and the fortuitous "raise" in their salaries, they had shaken the dust of Ovid from off their feet, and departed to fresh fields and pastures new, to marry the girls they had been engaged to all long or to study for one of the higher professions. Never a one of them all left a love gauge with a Miss Green, and in the bosom of the Green family many were the revilings cast upon those teachers, who, with a goodly countenance and a better appetite, had devoured Mrs. Green's layer cakes and preserves, feasted upon Hiram's peaches and driven his horses upon the false pretences of "intentions." However, in fairness to the teachers, one must remember that "some greatness thrust upon them." Foolish, indeed, would be the man who deliberately offended his trustees, and Hiram's hospitality was usually somewhat pressing proffered. This last teacher—bad luck to him!—had described himself in his application as a single man, when at the beginning of the summer vacation he sent in his certificates for consid-

eration in response to Hiram's advertisement and before these holidays had passed he married and came alone to Ovid to take up school in the autumn, and had eaten five teas and two dinners at Hiram Green's before he asked the eldest daughter, with whom he frequently found himself alone, where she thought he could rent a suitable house for himself and wife.

"This is very sudden," murmured Miss Green.

"Well, I don't know," he said, in a practical tone of voice, "I've been nearly two weeks away from her now, and I can't stand it much longer."

Miss Green gathered his meaning then, and never another tea did that teacher sit down to in Hiram Green's, and indeed the atmosphere of Ovid had been made so frigid for the little smooth-haired, blue-eyed girl he had married that he soon sent her away, and finding he could not do without her, finally sent in his own resignation. The Greens had a big family connection, and Ovid was made a cold place for those whom they did not like. The Cutler house on the hill and poor old Sam's stubborn door were about the only portals in Ovid that an enemy of the Greens might pass.

Henry Braddon acted as a soft, effective buffer between Hiram and Andrew, who both always wanted their own way, and wanted it at once.

"Best let Suse have the three hundred," said he; "old Reilly will be foreclosing on Sam soon if he don't raise the money somehow." Now, Reilly was the local usurer, the one hard-hearted, close-fisted old Shylock so often found in rural districts; the one man within a radius of twenty miles who had made a fortune. He was reputedly worth seventy or eighty thousand dollars; possibly he was worth fifty thousand. But when that is divided into mortgages, ranging from two or three hundred dollars up to, perhaps, one or two of five thousand, one can realize what a power he was in the country side; how many heart-strings he had tangled in his grasping fingers; from how many couches his shadowy outstretched hand banished sleep; at how many tables his hollow, gaping palm was seen, as the children put out their hands for food; before how many hearths his spectral presence ever sat with a look of anticipatory proprietorship. He was as cruel as the grave, and as relentless as time. Not one ten minutes of grace did ever any one get from old Reilly. The children looked at him with awe as he drove past in his old-fashioned buggy, a hatchet-faced old man, thin, cold-blooded, with big knuckly hands holding the reins. Hen Braddon knew what he was doing when he referred to

him. The week before, Hiram Green's brother had been turned neck and crop out of his farm by this same Reilly. No fear that Hiram would let him get another "haul" off old Sam if he could help it.

"That's so," said Hiram, with alacrity. "Andrew, you just make out the appointment, will you? and you post it, Hen, when you go home."

Andrew having gained his point, was generously sorry that he had twitted Hiram about the salary matter, so in the subsequent open meeting he let Hiram do all the talking, looking the while at a dark stain on the ceiling, which a coat of whitewash, put on yearly since he was a boy, had failed to obliterate. He would never forget how that ink went up, and that might be the very same old box stove over in the corner, the one upon which he set that tightly corked bottle of frozen ink to thaw, taking precaution at the same time to be cut of the road when it exploded. It had been a particularly brilliant "go off" that—straight up to the ceiling and down in a shower of black spatters. Andrew could see the fun of it yet, and found himself involuntarily looking at his palms, as though some traces of the blisters the teacher's rawhide had raised might still be there. Andrew recalled many other such like exploits, and looked at his

smooth, brown palms, thinking how many thorough thrashings he had had, when suddenly a line of poetry he had read some days before, came into his head :

"Lay thy sweet hands in mine, and trust to me."

He sat through the meeting quite oblivious of what was going on, missing what was one of the finest oratorical flights of Hiram Green's career. He was speaking of the departing teacher, and he made many scathing remarks anent the legends and pictures upon the walls, which, as he brilliantly put it, "indicated an entire and deplorable lack of discipline upon the part of the present teacher." The said teacher smiled and said nothing. Had Hiram looked closely at the pictures he would have found that a good many of the drawings were caricatures of himself and his family. In one rude picture the four Misses Green were represented as having hold of a man, who struggled in the midst. By means of certain facial peculiarities, exaggerated as only a genius or a school-boy would dare exaggerate, any one in Ovid could have identified the Misses Green and their victim, a former teacher. One of the ladies held a coat sleeve she had rent off; another a portion of a coat-tail; and over this group the artist had printed in fair

round script, "For his garment they cast lots. Under the circumstances the applicability of this would have been a credit to Du Maurier, and but for it said in defence of the school-boy artist, it was probably written with no thought of being impious. Your school-boy caricaturist catches the spirit of the times.

The participants in the school meeting were just departing from the school-house doors, when to them came old Sam Symmons. He had just been told by Suse of her application, and an almost stifling eagerness was filling his heart. If she got it, it meant so much; but he presented his usual suave, smiling old face to Herbradon and Hiram Green, and said nothing. As Andrew passed the old man looked at him. That look of age to green manhood, how pitiful it is! Andrew paused a moment. "We're going to have an Ovid teacher this time," he said. "You'll tell Suse, won't you, Mr. Symmons, that her appointment is in the mails?"

Poor old Sam! It was harder for him to carry off good fortune with nonchalance than it was to remain impassive in the face of bad. He had had so much more practice in the latter form of self-control. He drew his breath deeply and his lips quivered a little. Andrew saw this and added, "Don't forget to tell her, Mr. Symmons," and went on his way.

Forget !

"Meeting over, Mr. Braddon ? Meeting over ?" Sam queried, falling into the irregular ranks of the moving men. "Well, well I remember the time your grandfather and I were school trustees, and he was a shoemaker, and a better man with lasts than letters. In his young days he used to go about from house to house making the shoes. He had regular places for calling ; two pairs a year was the allowance—well, that custom has long gone by. Anyhow, we were both trustees, and one day we went out to the Beechwood School, section No. 6 now. Well, the minister was there, too, and Squire Harkness—both long dead now—brothers they were. One of the children handed up her slate for your grandfather to look at, and he, holding it in front of him at arm's length, said, with consideration seemingly to its merits, 'Fair, very fair,' which was right enough truly ; but when your grandfather held it over to the rest of us, 'twas plain to be seen I had had the slate upside down. Yes, he was ambitious, too, your grandfather was, and got on well in the world ; he even bought him a big silver watch. Watches weren't so plentiful in those days. You didn't get a watch in the pocket of every suit of clothes you bought then, as the papers would

show you do now. And when we asked your grandfather what time it was, as we would frequently do, being minded to please him, he would take out his watch, look at it with consideration, and hold it out to us saying, 'Who ha' thought 'twas that time o' day,' in surprise seemingly, which was right smart, for he never learned to read time, your grandfather didn't. But a good business man he was, and a good neighbour, as many a poor body knew."

Old Sam and his following straggled in twos and threes up the street, past Bill Aikins' house where Bill stood in the doorway smoking, having just helped his wife Kate, *née* Horne, hang up the day's washing, school meetings being in his wife's opinion too provocative of idleness, the idleness which the devil improves, to be indulged in by Bill.

Bill's house, albeit small, had a particularly aggressive look. It had a door in the centre and a window with red-painted sash on either side. These windows always shone effulgently clean. Whether this brilliancy of pane or the vermilion paint produced the effect, it is difficult to say, but certain it is that Bill's house always looked as though it were about to spring on the road, which was, figuratively, much the same as the attitude of Bill's wife towards him.

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Bill Aikins had originally been a boy brought out by one of the benevolent English societies, which gather up the scum of their own cities and trust to the more sparkling atmosphere of the New World to aërate it into "respectable and useful citizens." Bill Aikins had taken French leave of the minister with whom the Home had placed him. A plenitude of prayers and a paucity of what Bill had called "hot wittles," decided him upon this step. He wandered to Ovid, and for many years had been a hired man "to the various farmers within ten miles of the village. He was a good worker, but lacked ballast, and was rapidly degenerating into a sot when Kate Horne married him, and, as the boys expressed it, "brought him up standing."

The men greeted Bill pleasantly, and Bill responded genially, trying to look as if he was unconscious of Kate's criticisms upon the men passing—a somewhat difficult thing to accomplish, as Kate spoke so loudly from the room behind that her remarks were perfectly audible to the subjects of them.

One by one the crowd dwindled away, and then old Sam "putting his best foot foremost," as he would have said, hurried home and told the news of her good fortune. She was very elated.

was Suse, and kept murmuring to herself, "I'll just show them Greens what's what."

Long after the last light had twinkled out in the village, a shaft of light streamed across the old garden of the house on the hill. For all the calm of Andrew's heart was gone. The peace of the first acceptance of the fact that he loved this stranger girl had vanished. He got down on his knees, reached under the bed and pulled out an old, old-fashioned little chest, covered with untanned cowhide, whose brown and white patches were studded with rows of big brass nails. It held the books over which his mother's pretty dark head had bent so often, close by that other proud one, which soon lay humbly enough in its kindred dust. It was no unusual thing for Andrew to spend half the night poring over these books. There was a fat little copy of Shakespeare, with ruinously small print; a quaint little leather volume of Francis Quarles; George Herbert's poetry; Suckling's and a subscription copy of the *Queen's Wake*, "dedicated to the Princess Charlotte by a shepherd in the Highlands of Scotland." These, with a few others, had formed his mother's library. Getting them out, he looked for certain passages he knew well—passages that had wrung his heart

before this with their description of unattainable sweetness and love—passages that had almost made him despair, and yet, not wholly, for he had dreamed a dream of one day going forth to seek and *find* a Beatrice, a Juliet, a Desdemona, a Rosalind—all in one divine combination of womanhood, worthy to have been addressed in the immortal sonnets. And, lo! the spring had brought her—would the summer give her to him? The kindly summer that gives the flower to the bee, the sun to the flower, the blue sky to the sun, and all the earth to joy. Surely—and but a mile away Judith slept, dreaming, but not of song. And over the waters that quickened with insect life, through the air all astir with the scents and savours of spring, athwart the earth that was quivering with the growth of all things green—summer came one day nearer.

CHAPTER V.

“Sweet Spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My Musick shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.”

JUDITH MOORE, the operatic singer, was not an ailing woman usually. In fact, she had very sweet and well-balanced health, but in her make-up the mental and physical balanced each other so well, and were so closely allied that any joy or grief—in short, any emotion—reacted strongly upon her physical organism. Heart and brain, sense and spirit were close knit. Delicately strung as an Æolian harp, she vibrated too strongly to the winds that swept over her. As strings grow lax or snap from being over-taut, so her nerves had failed under the tension of excitement, and effort, and triumph. Two years before she had made her *début* upon the operatic stage in Germany, stepping from the strictest tutelage to an instant and unquestioned success. Even yet when she thought of that night her cheeks would flush

her eyes dilate, her head poise itself more proudly. She recalled it so well. Her manager's eagerness, that made his dark face almost livid; her own fright; the mascot thrust hastily into her hand by an old *attaché* of the playhouse. She remembered all the details of this performance better than any other—the orchestra and the people; the peculiar, loving droop of the shoulder with which one of the 'cello players bent above his sonorous instrument. Then came her effort, and it seemed the next moment the thunderous applause, the flowers, the deep-throated Hoch! Hoch! and the joyous cursing of her manager behind the scenes.

Yes, that was life.

And as she lived her triumphs over again, she felt the supreme exaltation of a genius in a great gift, the God-like thrill of mastery, the glorious certainty of capacity, the birth-pang of creation. There is no gift so marvellous, so maddening, so divine as the gift of song—none so evanescent, none so sad.

This woman inhaled the common ether of a prosaic world, mingled it with her breath and sent it forth glorified as sound—sound such as nothing made with men's hands in all the world can produce. She created something divine, which died even as it was born, and passed into

the silence—silence that has absorbed so many sweet and terrible things. She sang; she sent forth her heart, her being, her soul from her lips, like a beautiful unseen dove seeking a sign; and there returned to her—silence. From all the glorious “choir invisible” that had gone before there came back no word. And the wonder, and triumph, and pity of it grew upon her, so that she began to eat her heart out with loneliness.

Her voice lifted her up to the gods; when she returned to earth, there was no loving breast for her to rest upon, no strong hands to sustain her, no lips to kiss the pain of music from her own, none to seal the bliss of singing into abiding joy.

Two years of this, and Judith Moore left it all, and came, in the summer preceding her American *début*, to this little Canadian village. She had told her manager, the only person she knew well enough to write to, that he was not to write. He knew where she was; she would let him know if she needed him. Let her rest, for just a little, she pleaded. And he agreed.

She owed everything she was to this man, who had been a friend of her father's. Passing through the little town where they were, he had come to visit them. He found his old

friend's funeral leaving the house. He came back to see the desolate girl. Then followed the discovery of her voice, and his investment in her as a good speculation. It was going to prove one, too, though the anxiety of it had given him a grey hair or two in his black head. Yes, it had been a good speculation already, for the two years' singing abroad had recouped him for all his outlay of money. The American season would repay his patience, and the South American tour, and the winter in Russia—the *impresario's* plans stretched far into the future through golden vistas of profit. That Judith might have other dreams he never considered.

She herself had no well-defined thought but to excel in her art. She did not in the least understand what was amiss with her. Not but what in many dreams by night, and visions by day, she had thought of a passion that was to transfigure her life; but so used was she to passing from the reality of life to the dream on the stage, that the visions and the verities became sadly confused, and so she grew day by day more eager to attain, more anxious to achieve the highest in her art, more unsparing of her own efforts, always trembling just on the threshold of the unknown, always feeling one



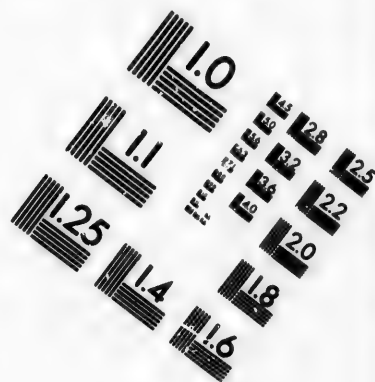
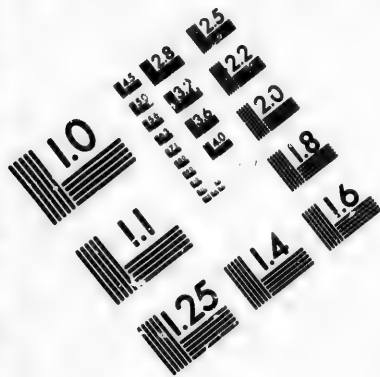
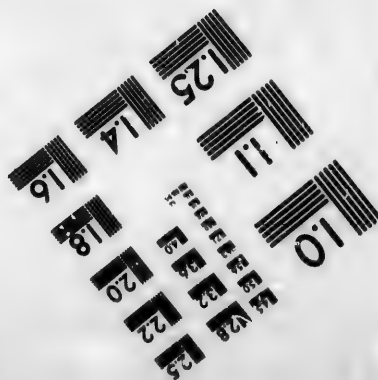
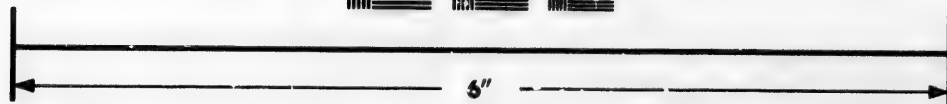
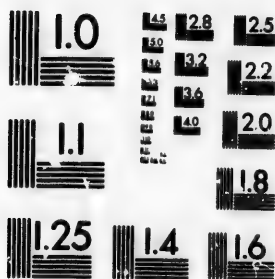


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more upward effort of her wings would take her to the very pinnacle of song. There surely grew the balm of sweet content, of satisfaction, of peace. Poor Judith! For her the real content lay in a green valley, far, far below these perilous peaks upon which she tottered; whereon no woman may safely stand, it seems, without a stronger soul beside her to sustain in time of need. Her happiness lay in a valley where love springs and happiness flows in streams about the feet, and as she aspired higher and higher, and rose farther and farther into the rarefied air which solitary success breathes, she left the Happy Valley farther and farther behind.

Had she been less evenly balanced, had her soul been less true, her heart less tender, she might in time have frozen the woman completely, and crystallized into the *artiste* only—or—but to think of Judith Moore sullyng her wings is sacrilege.

She was full of womanly tenderness and womanly vanities. She had a thousand little tricks of coquetry and as many balms to ease their smart. She took a good deal of satisfaction out of her pretty gowns and her finger nails, and the contemplation of her little feet becomingly shod had been known to dry her

ears. She was essentially the woman of the East, the woman who created a "type" distinct from man; the womanly woman, not the hybrid creature of modern cultivation; the woman of romance. To balance this (for nowadays this doubtless needs excuse) she had a fund of sympathy great enough to endow every living thing that suffered with pity. She had certainly that charity without which all other virtues are as sounding brass." She sent away those who came in contact with her the better for their meeting, and from her eyes their shone a purity of soul that had abashed some men whose eyes had long forgotten shame.

Such was Judith Moore.

When Andrew approached the Morris house, the next day after the apple-tree episode, he saw from afar a figure in white sitting perched on the weather-beaten rail fence which separated his woodland from the Morris farm. He hastened his steps, his heart beating hotly. Judith was in a repentant and somewhat shamefaced mood. Upon reflection it had occurred to her that her behaviour the day before had been a little less than bold. Judith had felt all over it, and had even cried a bit, as English women will. She was, of course, prepared to make Andrew suffer for her misdeeds

if he in any way showed a recollection of the incident, and had decided to assume a very haughty mien if he dared say "feet."

Andrew's intuitions were not slow, even if he was only a farmer, and when he greeted her, and she suddenly, sweetly, strangely blushed and looked up at him half inquiringly, he interpreted it aright. He had been amused, perhaps aroused, by her impertinence; he was touched by her unexpressed penitence.

Miss Judith had on an artful frock; most of her frocks were artful and well put on, to which is the great thing. Judith never considered time thrown away that was spent adorning her "perishing person." This particular frock was of sheer white wool, and because she had a waist of the unhygienic type (and rejoiced thereat exceedingly, be it told, for she was thoroughly unregenerate), she had it girt with a ribbon, wound round and round her. It had huge loose sleeves of a kind not known to Ovid. "Sort of night-gowny looking," Andrew said afterwards, in describing her appearance to his aunt. How Miss Moore would have raged at that! Paquin, no less, had made the sleeves.

She was careful to keep her very toes out of sight this morning, and when she thought

Andrew was not looking, she gave anxious little tugs at her skirt to cover them yet more securely. Every one of these tugs Andrew saw, and they raised within him a spirit of deep indignation. "I wish that skirt would come off in your hand—serve her right if it did," he said to himself, aggrievedly, whilst apparently listening to Miss Moore's prophecies regarding the weather.

"Going to rain in three days?" he said. "How do you know?"

"Oh," said Miss Moore, with an indescribable look of wisdom, "there was a big ring round the moon last night, enclosing three stars. That means in three days it will storm—of course, rain—you'd hardly expect snow, would you?" As Moore spoke a little resentfully as she concluded, for Andrew did not look impressed.

"Well, no," agreed Andrew. "Did Mr. Morris tell you that?"

"Yes; we're going to shear sheep to-morrow."

"What?" Andrew was amused at the "we."

"That," said Judith, who in spite of her air of knowledge was somewhat nervous and not quite certain whether she had put it rightly or not. "Shear sheep" did sound queer.)

"Oh, you are. What else?"

"I'm going to learn to make butter. Mrs.

Morris says I have real 'butter hands.' They're so cool. Feel." She laid her hand on his.

"Yes, lovely," said Andrew, fervently; "but don't you think you ought to get well before you do all this? Stick to prophesying for a while. It's easier."

"Oh, if you're going to laugh at me—"

"No, indeed." (Miss Moore's brows were knitted.) "I'm not really, honestly; never had a thought of such a thing." Then, persuasively, "Don't you want to come and see a bird's nest?"

Miss Moore's attempt at bad temper collapsed.

"I should think I did," she said.

"Come on, then," said he.

"Oh, is it on that side? How do I get over?"

"Let me lift you."

"No, indeed! Turn your back, and I'll jump."

"Let—"

"No!"

Andrew wheeled on his heel. There was a soft thud and a scramble. He turned like a flash, but Miss Moore had regained her feet, and stood waiting with an expression of exaggerated patience on her face.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"Oh, waiting," she answered, with emphasis. "That walk was the first they ever had."

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ontrol to this girl who walked so unsteadily at
side, stumbling every now and then from the
accustomed roughness of the way. These little
t had evidently had all paths smoothed to
m. (He could not guess how chill those
ven pathways were.) How tender her eyes
ow over the wild flowers, and how sweet her
s when, for a moment, a serious thought came
her!

The wild flowers were in full luxuriance, and
lith gathered an armful. They passed a dog-
od tree that stood sheeted in its white blos-
as, their petals of the texture of white kid.
drew got her some great branches of it, and
insisted upon carrying it herself, holding all
spoil against her breast with one hand, using
other to lift her gown now and then, or to
ek more flowers.

Her face looked out from the flowers with
ind of rapt eagerness upon it that illumined

it like a light. Her enjoyment was so intense as to be almost painful. They had gone quite a distance from the Morris house, half the length of Andrew's woods, when they came to a little hollow. A stream ran through it, but so blocked was its way by the burrows of moles that it zigzagged across and across the hollow, seeming almost to form loops at some points. All along its course grew the tall, pale-mauve water-flag, its spikes of bloom rising from clumps of sword-like leaves that grew in the stream's edge. On the farther side of the hollow a mass of wild crab-apple trees were covered with their fragrant pink blooms, and heaped up at one end of the hollow was a great mass of loose stones, piled there as they had been gathered from the field. Dog-tooth violets, which love moisture, grew thickly about their feet, their yellow and brown blossoms springing from between pairs of spotted leaves. Where the leaves grew singly, there were no flowers. Here and there could be seen a blossom of the rarer white variety, the back of its recurved petals delicately tinged with pink. Close by the roots of some stumps there were velvety cushions of the thick green moss so often found in Canadian woods; bryony vines straggled over these, making a rich brocade in tones of green. Tufts of coarse ferns grew in the clear

the stumps, their last year's fronds withering beside them, the fresh ones just beginning to uncurl. And framing all this in, there was the curtain of trees in the first freshness of foliage. For a moment, in Judith's mind dream and reality became confused. The little glade so exactly simulated a well-set scene. There was something artificial in the piled-up stones; in the stream which made so much of itself in going such a short distance. It was so usual for her to stand before the footlights with her arms full of flowers. And the man at her side—she looked at him, and in a moment realized how completely and artistically he was in accord with the environment. His strong, bronzed face, his tall form, his expression, his dress, the look of utter comprehension with which his eyes took in the scene, over which her eyes lingered in admiration—all this was apparent to her at once. She was well used to considering the "unities" of this or that upon the scene, and she told herself the unities were surely satisfied now.

"Are you pleased?" he asked.

"I'm simply charmed," she said. "It is too beautiful to be real."

"Ah," he said, "that's where you make a mistake. It is only beautiful enough to be real."

She looked at him.

"You are tired," he went on, without waiting for an answer. "I've brought you too far. Will you sit down?"

"Yes, I think so. I really am awfully strong only I soon get tired."

"Exactly; one of the signs of great strength. Oh, come, don't get cross."

"I hate being laughed at; you're bad to me," she said pettishly.

Andrew was smitten to the heart. He began to think he'd been a brute.

He took off his coat, making no apology therefor. It did not occur to him that there was anything wrong in shirt sleeves. He spread it at the foot of a stump.

"You sit down there and rest," he said, "and I'll go get you some more flowers."

"Don't you want to rest?" she inquired solicitously.

"No, I'm not tired," he answered gravely. "I wouldn't laugh at her again in a hurry!"

"Well, hurry back."

So she watched him pick his way across the little hollow to the twisted and gnarled crab tree. And as she watched there stole over her eager spirit the first whiff of that peace which was soon to settle so sweetly upon her heart—

restful recognition of the joy of calm; and all was blended with the bitter sweet scent of the crab blossoms and the ineffable savour of spring woods.

Andrew was soon back at her side with a sheaf of flag lilies and big branches of apple blooms; and Judith for the first time held real crab-apple blossoms in her hands, with their perfume, that mingling of Marah and myrrh, rising to her as incense from a censer. She had long known the distilled perfume; how different this living fragrance was. Something of this she told Andrew.

"Yes," he said, "I understand you exactly. You won't like the manufactured stuff any more. I never could eat canned salmon after eating the real article fresh from the stream where I'd caught it."

Miss Moore looked at him.

He laughed outright at her expression of disgust.

"Was it very awful to liken crab blooms to salmon? They're much of the same colour."

"Don't dare say another word," said Miss Moore. "You're horrid."

Andrew reddened and looked a little stiff.

Miss Moore eyed him furtively. "Mr. Cutler?"

"Yes."

"Would you like me to sing to you?"

Like a child Miss Moore proffered her biggest bribe first.

"Rather," said Andrew, with emphasis, forgetting his dignity. "I should think I would."

Seeing him so eager, Miss Moore was minded to postpone his pleasure a bit. "What shall I sing?" she asked.

"Anything—your favourite, anything you like, only sing." And she sang a song by Rosetti, beginning—

"A little while, a little love
The hour yet bears for thee and me
Who have not drawn the veil to see
If still our heaven be lit above."

And which ends—

"Not yet the end; be our lips dumb
In smiles a little season yet,
I'll tell thee, when the end is come,
How we may best forget."

When it was over he turned and looked at her as at a marvel. What manner of woman was this? The one moment a curious child, the next a proud woman; again, a poor, little tired girl, and then—how should he name this singing angel.

Miss Moore was used to homage and applause

and went to see people moved by her singing, but never a tribute had been more sweet to her than the look in this countryman's eyes.

"I will sing again," she said, and began a little Scotch song.

Afterwards Miss Moore was sorry about this, and thought bitterly that she could not, even for an hour, put aside the *rôle* of the opera singer seeking to play upon her public. For she had been taught the value of appealing to sentiment as a factor towards success, and many a night, after singing the most intricate operas, she had responded to the *encore* by singing "Home, Sweet Home" or "Annie Laurie," or some other simple peasant ballad that touches the heart. It is a trick *prima donnas* all have.

The song she sang Andrew was "Jock o' Hazeldean"; the story of the high-born girl who loved Jock o' Hazeldean. Who was he, we wonder. This fascinating Jock, of Hazeldean, smacks more of the Merrie Greenwood than of broad domains. But at any rate he must have been right worthy to be loved, else such a leal, brave-hearted, beautiful girl had not loved him. Torn, too, she was between two thoughts—her family, her plighted troth, riches and—Jock—so that

"Whene'er she loot
'The tears doon fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean."

For she had made up her mind evidently to give him up, but these treacherous tears betrayed themselves whenever she bent her head, and when a woman's heart is breaking she cannot always hold her head high. And in the end they nearly married her to the "Lord of Errington." But—

"The kirk was decked at morning tide,
The tapers glimmered fair,
Both priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight were there.
They sought her then by bower and ha';
The lady wasna seen—
She's ower the border, and awa
With Jock o' Hazeldean."

Well Judith Moore sang the words of the song, but she did more. Her vibrant voice expressed all the pathos, the romance, the tenderness, that lives between the words; and in the last two lines there was a sort of timorous triumph, as of one who has gained victory over the world, her family, her own fears, and won to her lover's breast, and yet trembles in her triumph. Women do not give themselves even to their best beloved without tears.

This was in reality the great charm of Judith singing—a charm no perfection of method, or quality of tone could have produced. She felt

the full significance of everything she sang, and had that sympathetic magnetism which creates its own moods in others. That is fascination. That is the secret of these women at whose power the world has wondered, whose loves have been the passions of history, whose whims have legislated the affairs of kingdoms.

"Don't sing any more," Andrew said when she finished. "I've had enough for one day."

"You feel my music as I do myself," she said softly. "It is almost pain."

Presently they went back through the woods, more silently than they had come, and yet happier. Judith looked up at him once or twice with no veil of laughter on her eyes. He was thrilled with the expression he found there; now it seemed a steadfast ray of unselfish resolution, again a yearning so poignant that it almost unnerved him. He showed her the nest in the furrows.

"In a little while there will be birds in the nest," he said.

"Oh, I'll come and watch it every day."

"You must not come too often or stay too long," he said, "or the bird will get frightened and forsake her nest—fly away and never come back."

"Oh, surely not fly away from that nest," Judith cried. To her that rough little wisp of coiled grass and horsehair represented the perfection of bird architecture.

"If you would only come to the house—my house over there on the hill," said Andrew, flushing a little and very eager; "my aunt would like you to so much, and I would show you a lot of nests. We have more birds there" (suddenly feeling very proud of this fact) "than anywhere else in the county."

"Oh, I'd like to ever so much," said Judith. "Your aunt?"

"Suppose I send my aunt over to see you?" said Andrew, quite ignorant of the etiquette of calls, but hitting it off well in his ignorance. "She'll come to visit Mrs. Morris, and then, of course, if you care to see her, she'll be so glad to ask you to come over."

"Does your aunt visit the Morrises?" asked Judith, with some surprise.

"Why, of course; we only live a mile away," said Andrew, entirely oblivious of the compliment to himself.

"Oh, yes, of course," said Judith, hastily feeling mean.

Finally they said "Good-bye." Andrew had gone but a few steps when she called him.

"Wait a moment. When do you think your aunt will come?"

"Soon; not to-morrow, she's going to town. Perhaps next day. Why?"

"Oh, I want to put on a pretty frock," she said candidly.

"Well," said Andrew, with conviction, "you can't beat that one."

Miss Moore went back to the house. A weather-beaten frame house it was, with a weather-vane in the shape of a horse on top. When the horse's nose pointed over Judith's window, the wind was east; when it seemed to gallop in the direction of the kitchen, it was west; when it made for the village, it was south, and when it looked with a longing eye, apparently, at the stables, it was north. Mr. Morris explained this to Judith on an average once a day, but she always got it mixed.

Mrs. Morris was vigorously making pies when Judith entered.

"Baking?" said Judith.

"Yes," said Mrs. Morris, breaking the crisp stalks of rhubarb into little pieces. "Yes, I'm sure I'm going to have company" (she broke the last piece of rhubarb with a snap and commenced rolling out her paste with soft thuds). "Yes, company's coming sure. I dropped my dishcloth

three times this morning, and then the old brahma, he just stood on that doocstep and crowed for all he was worth. I never knowed that bird to crow on that doorstep without strange feet soon stood on it."

Mrs. Morris covered her pie, and then holding the pie plate upon the fingers of one hand, dexterously ran a knife around the edge, trimming off a ring of paste that fell on her arm; then she dabbed it with a fork and put it in the oven.

"I want something to put my flowers in," said Judith. "May I take some of those big earthen jars out there?" pointing to the open door of the pantry, within which stood some old-fashioned, rough, grey crocks.

"Yes," said Mrs. Morris, absent-mindedly, as she carefully "tried" a cake with a straw from the broom to see if it was done; "yes"—then coming back to sublunary matters as she shut the oven door, "But sake's alive, child, you don't want them things to put them in! I'll get you the scissors and some string so you can cut the blows off them apple branches and make good round bunches, and there's some posy pots I bought in town one day. I'll get them to put them in."

Judith's heart sank. She was too afraid of hurting Mrs. Morris' feelings to say anything

but when that busy woman appeared with some hideous blue and green and gilt atrocities, a bright thought struck her.

"Oh, Mrs. Morris," she said, "those are too nice altogether. Just let me use the jars; those might get broken."

"Well," said Mrs. Morris, pausing in the door of the sitting-room, "they be only wild crabs and dogwood blows. It would be a pity to risk it, maybe." So she took back the vases and replaced the bouquets of everlastings in them, feeling she had done her duty to her boarder, but glad that matters had arranged themselves as they had.

So Judith got out the jars and filled them with great bunches of the dogwood, which gives such a Japanesque effect of blossom on bare branch, and with the apple blossoms, the wild iris mingling its dainty mauve equally well with each. Then she leaned back against the door jamb (she was sitting on the doorstep), and dreamily listened to Mrs. Morris.

What a strange medley of criticism, information, prophecy and humour the talk of such a woman is, all given forth with no coherence, no sequence of ideas, the *disjecta membra* of a thousand gossipy stories, the flotsam and jetsam of the slow-flowing stream of country life; now

and then hitting off, as if by chance, a word or two which is a complete characterization of a person or place; now and then piercing to the heart of some vital human truth; now and then sowing a seed of scandal to bring forth bitterness; now and then by a pause, a sigh or a word revealing the griefs of a homely heart, and always perpetuating a hundred harmless conceits of fancy, signs, warnings, and what Mrs. Morris called, "omings that mean something."

Mrs. Morris was popularly considered the most talkative woman in Ovid, always excepting Bill Aikins' wife who had so far distanced the others as to fairly outclass them. Sometimes Mrs. Morris wearied Judith to death with her tongue, but out of the resources of her generous heart, which always could furnish excuses for everybody, Judith found palliation for Mrs. Morris' fault. There was a certain plot in the unkempt little graveyard in Ovid wherein were five tiny graves; over each was a coverlet of straggly clove pinks, and each of the little sleepers had been borne away from the farm-house by the woods. Now and then, but rarely, Mrs. Morris spoke of these babies. Their united ages would not have numbered half a dozen years; but Mrs. Morris, with the strange divination of mother

hood, had seen in their infantile ways the indications of distinctive character, so that each of these dead children had as individual a place in her memory as though it had worked and wept and wearied itself into old age. And to Judith this seemed excuse enough for poor shattering Mrs. Morris. All the breath other mothers use in speaking to their children, all the time they spend in silent thought about them and for them, was barren to this lonely old woman. "Who could wonder then that she wants to talk a bit?" Judith one day said to Andrew, wistfully, when he was laughing at Mrs. Morris' tongue. Indeed, Judith's tender eyes pierced deep down into the depths of these people's hearts. The ugly gossip, the sneering spite, the malignant whisperings she heard, filled her with a pity divine enough to crown the disgust which their backbiting and meananness awakened. The pity of it! she thought, looking at the miracle of the summer fields beneath the summer sky; the upward aspiration of every blade of grass, of every tiny wig, of every little Morning Glory seedling, striving to lift itself up, stretching forth its tendrils towards anything that would bear it higher; everything reaching towards the light. And these people, surrounded by the strong

silent stimulus of nature, going with their eyes fixed upon the clods, or at most raised but to the level of their own heads, striving to grasp some puny self-glorification, letting the real gold of life run through their fingers like sand whilst with eager palms they snatched at the base alloys which corroded their hands !

When Judith heard one woman say of another "She's a most terrible nice woman. She works like a horse," she did not feel as much like laughing at the narrowness of the vision which pronounced such judgment, as weeping, that life had ways which people trod wherein brutish physical exertion seemed the highest good. It will be seen that Judith had a tender and discerning eye to penetrate the pains and sorrows of others, but she could not decipher her own heart yet. It is hard to get one's self in true perspective. It would indeed be a gift from the gods if we could see ourselves.

CHAPTER VI.

"He who sings

To fill the highest purpose, need not soar
Above the lintel of the peasant's door."

BEFORE the Morris house there stretched a space of unkempt grass, broken by three or four irregular flower beds, upon which the grass encroached, from which the flowers sometimes strayed afield. In these beds were clumps of jonquils—"yeller petticoats," Mrs. Morris called them—and there were heavy headed daffodils, which, to Judith's delight, she dubbed daff'down-allies. There were patches of purple iris, too, and through one of the beds the sturdy roseate stems of the common pæony were pushing their way. A big bush of flowering currant was covered with its yellow flowers, murmurous with hundreds of bees, for they are very sweet. The stems of the florets are bitten off by children to get a drop of honey in each, just as in the florets of a clover bloom.

Up and down the sanded pathway leading to Mrs. Morris' front door paced Judith Moore,

two days after Andrew's visit. She had on a brown frock, girdled with a filigreed belt of silver gilt; a bunch of jonquils at her bosom caught together the folds of some soft old lace; her heels added a good two inches to her stature, and she felt herself to be very well turned out.

It was warm; the robins were building nests. Presently one flew by with a scrap of brilliant red wool, and in a moment or two flew down from the gable of the house, and regaled itself with a long worm which it had spied from afar. It despatched its lunch with gusto, cocked its head on one side, preened the feathers of its wings with its foot, as one would run the hand through the hair, and then started in on its house-building again. "From labour to refreshment," thought Judith.

She herself was in a state of tremulous happiness; her being, freed from all artificial restraints, released from all conventional bonds, was unfolding, as naturally as the flower buds to the sunshine; her thoughts, no longer bent exclusively upon her art, no longer dwelling upon the next triumph, found for themselves new and unexpected pathways. For the first time she gave herself up to the perilous pleasure of introspection. In "sessions of sweet silent thought" her fragmentary dreams and ideals of life, love

and nature, were attuning themselves to a true and eager aspiration to be worthy the best gift of each. Her heart—well, her heart had not been awakened yet. Like the great white lilies in Miss Myers' garden, it was yet half asleep, but stirring within it was the sweetness of spring, of springing life, and love, and the first poignant sweetness of self-consciousness. The lilies were yet only putting forth feeble leaves, as if to test what manner of upper world wooed them to put forth a blossom. So the little tender impulses of Judith's heart were yet very timorous. But the lilies would bloom in good time—and the heart?

Judith was still pacing back and forth when a tall, angular figure, in a black cashmere gown and a broad black shade hat, appeared in the gateway, followed decorously by a melancholy red setter, whose melancholy and good manners vanished simultaneously as a cat, walking speculatively round the corner of the house, caught his eye. Rufus vanished, with the cat in a good lead. Rufus' acceptance of the possibilities of the situation had been so prompt, the cat's transition from a dreamer to a fugitive had been so sudden that Judith forgot the propitiatory smile with which she had intended to greet Miss Myers, and gave a regular peal of laughter.

Miss Myers had come to call, or, as she herself put it, had "come to visit a spell with Mrs. Morris."

"Oh, the poor cat!" said Judith, not knowing very well what to say, and getting rather red.

"Is it your cat? I'm real sorry. Rufus is always hard on cats. There's one cat in the village though—but there, you must be the boarder. I'm real glad to see you."

"Yes," said Judith, "I'm Judith Moore, and you must be Miss Myers; I know you by the dog."

Then a quick sense of the vision she had just had of Rufus, the eager outstretched nose, the flying heels whisking past the side of the house, the cat's hysteric spitting as she turned and fled—this made Judith catch her breath.

Miss Myers laughed grimly. It was her fortune always to look grim, even when she wept. Afterwards, Judith knew that Miss Myers had thoroughly appreciated the humour of the situation, and had loved Judith "from the minute I set eyes on her," as Miss Myers said. Perhaps, out of loyalty to Andrew, Miss Myers exaggerated a little her first feeling toward Judith, but for that kindly exaggeration one could gather her in one's arms.

Great indeed must be the love of that woman who is willing to accept, nay, even help, to win

the woman who is to displace her in the affections of one with whom she has from babyhood been first. And that is the doom of all women who rear children, whether their own or not; to nurse them, watch them, pray for them, painfully perhaps; keep them as pure as may be; make them as true as possible; and then some day have them bring a stranger, a boy or girl, of whom they have bereft some other woman, and say, "Look, this is my best beloved." Is not that a great reward for which to fast, and thirst, and labour? And yet that is the good guerdon gained by many a woman whose name, if but granted the right meed of praise, would be written in letters of gold on a silver sky.

Recognizing this, what tenderness should not be felt towards such women, what gratitude accorded them for the good gift they have rendered up?

Mrs. Morris came fussily to the door. "Miss Myers, let me make you acquainted with Miss Moore. Come right in; sit down. Won't take off your things? Well, now, that's real mean! I quite expected you'd come for a good visit. Whatever be these dogs a-yelping at? Well, it beats all! Just look at 'em," pointing out at the sitting-room window, which gave a view of the orchard.

In the cleft of an apple-tree, just beyond the reach of the dogs' leaps, sat the cat, an insulting indifference expressed in every line of her crouching shape, turning a calm countenance to her impotent foes. The collie, seduced by the example of Rufus, had cast aside the veneer of amity overlying his natural instinct, and now careered round and round the tree trunk, making futile leaps at the cat; whilst Rufus stood uttering the characteristically mournful bark of his breed, and waving his feathery tail as if courtesy might induce the cat to descend and be worried. However, the cat was an old-stager. Her narrowed eyes gleamed venomously, and she thought evil thoughts, but that was all.

"Old Tab 'll tire them dogs out before they get through with her," said Mrs. Morris, placidly; and sometime later, when the ladies looked forth again, the cat was delicately walking along the top of the board fence, and the two dogs were in full cry after a squirrel. It is probable that those dogs, before they slept that night, wondered many a time and oft what trees were created for, if not specially intended to deprive decent dogs of a little legitimate sport.

Mrs. Morris, when she had no company, occupied her spare time in "teazing" the wool shorn from the sheep, preparatory to sending it

to the woollen mill; but she did not bring this work into the sitting-room. She brought in her braided mat. First she sewed strips of cloth together, and when she had three differently coloured balls made, she braided them into a flat strand, then she sewed that round and round, till it grew into a mat. All the rag carpets in Mrs. Morris' house were bestrewn with these mats, placed at irregular intervals, but practice and instinct so guided Mrs. Morris' feet, that she never, by any chance, no matter how engrossed she might be in other matters, stepped upon a space of carpet. There was something very interesting about this. She did it so unconsciously, so accurately, like an erratic automaton. It is true this practice did not conduce to a Delsartean evenness of step; and indeed, Mrs. Morris, when walking through the fields, or along the road, carried in her gait the *replica* of the floor plan of her first three rooms. Through the front room, the sitting-room, the kitchen, that was the course she mapped upon the road she travelled again and again. The wily Vivien would not have won readily the secret of Mrs. Morris' woven paces.

Miss Myers took off her shade hat and held it on her lap. Judith sat prettily erect, bending forward now and then, as if alert to answer Miss

Myers' commonplaces—a flattering attitude that Mrs. Morris braided her strands firmly, looking benignantly over her spectacles, which, having slipped down to the very point of her nose, by some miracle preserved a tentative hold. Their precarious position gave Miss Myers “nerves.” She clasped her thin hands tightly “to stiddy herself up.”

They talked of the every-day incidents of their homely lives. The first question that came up was house-cleaning, a very vital matter to the country housewife in spring and autumn. Of course, these two women, being notable house-keepers, had theirs done long ago, but there were others—well, neither of these ladies wished to make remarks, least of all about their neighbours, still—

Then they discussed the proper time for picking the geese (that is, denuding the live geese of the feathers they would otherwise lose), and both had often noticed the wilful waste of the Greens, in letting their geese go unplucked, so that the village street was snowed with wasted feathers which floated about in the air, or sailed, the most fragile of crafts, in the little water-crossed stream. This led naturally to the mysterious disappearance of Hiram Green's twelve geese, a story retold for Judith's benefit.

Once when Hiram Green was breaking in a colt in his barn-yard, the dogs frightened it, and between Hiram's shouts, the dogs' barks and the colt's plunging, the geese, twelve in number, took unto themselves wings and flew away. The fact that they were able to do this reflected directly upon Hiram's management, and pronounced it poor, for, of course, he should have taken the precaution of clipping the feathers of one wing, as every one did, to prevent just such losses. However, the geese flew away. In the excitement of the moment the direction of their flight was unnoted, but willing volunteers spread the news, and defined the ownership of any stray geese which might be found. The Hornes lived in a house very near the crest of the hill upon the south; so near to the top was it, that it gave the impression of wanting to sneak away out of sight of the village. It seemed to withdraw itself from the village gaze, and had a secretive and uncommunicative look. Perhaps the house did not really deserve this description, but popular opinion accorded it. The Hornes were aliens to Ovid; no one knew much about them, and that in itself is a grievance in such a place as Ovid. Well, a zealous searcher for the geese inquired of Mrs. Horne for tidings of them. Mrs. Horne, standing upon her doorstep, regretted

Hiram's loss and deplored not having seen them. The messenger departed. But "people talked" as people will when such coincidences occur—when on the next market day Mr. Horne sold twelve fine fat geese, whilst his own pursued the even tenor of their way unmolested.

There was no proof of mal-appropriation, for a dead goose does not usually bear many distinctive marks of individuality—still, people talked. And the next day, when Mrs. Horne bought ticking in Hiram's store, to make a couple of pillows, Hiram felt aggrieved as he tied it up, and vaguely wondered if this was not "seething the kid in its mother's milk." Neither Miss Myers nor Mrs. Morris committed herself to any definite expression of opinion as to the Hornes' responsibility in the matter, for neither of them wished to give the other the opportunity of quoting her verdict, but they shook their heads at each other, and raised their eyebrows and pursed up their lips, and then abruptly branched off to another question, which happened to be whether or not it was advisable to soak carrot seeds in water before planting—the implied decision in the goose question amounting practically to the "Not Proven" verdict of the Scotch courts, than which nothing is more damning.

At last Mrs. Morris' spectacles did fall of, and Miss Myers' nervous start had a good deal of relief in it. A crisis is best over.

Old Mr. Morris came in, and began to discuss the death of Sam Symmons' mare. Not having been present at the consultation regarding her, he was absolutely certain that she had not been accorded the proper treatment. "Might have been the right treatment for an ellefung, but not for a hoss, no, not for a hoss, not by no mears." Then he gave a long and critical dissertation upon the merits of each remedy used, proving conclusively, at least to himself, that in the case of Sam's mare they were all so much poison. Miss Myers must come out and see his sorrel filly. "There was a filly like a filly, not such another in the country!" So they all strolled out to the board fence, and looked at the clean-limbed little sorrel, whilst Mr. Morris dilated upon her good points. A man is always frankly and irrepressibly egotistical upon two subjects—his horses and his judgment.

Miss Myers did not go back to the house, and Mrs. Morris and Judith strolled with her to the gate. They bade each other good-bye there, Miss Myers sniffing at a twig of lemon balm which she had gathered. Judith and Mrs. Morris were to visit Miss Myers two days later.

Little had been said about Andrew, but enough to show Judith that he was the very apple of Miss Myers' eye.

"Sarah Myers thinks a powerful sight of Andrew Cutler," said Mrs. Morris. "It seems sort of heathenish to be so set on any one. I don't hold with it. Well, if you hain't got no children to laugh with, you hain't got none to cry over." The yearning of her empty mother-heart had taught her this pitiable philosophy.

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It was three o'clock when Mrs. Morris and Judith reached the Cutler house on the hill.

Mr. Morris had driven them as far as the village in the democrat waggon. He stopped at the blacksmith shop, and they alighted, to walk through the village to their destination, whilst he went on an errand to town. There were very few people to be seen on the village streets.

Tommy Slick and his dog Nip met them. Tommy looked very guileless, with round face, beautifully tinted white and pink, big clear eyes and "lips depressed, as he were meek." In his hands he carried a horse's halter and a tin pail. Nip followed, with limply hanging tail, lowered nose and hunched-up shoulders, but an expression not so wholly deprecating as his attitude. When Tommy looked meek, and Nip innocent,

it behooved the village to be wary; there was some mischief afoot.

"There's that Slick limb," said Mrs. Morris. "I'll be bound he ain't up to no good; and that dog of his, look at it!"

"It looks hungry," said Judith.

"Then I'll go bail there's no vittles in the village if that dog's going empty," said Mrs. Morris. (Some memory seemed struggling for utterance.)

Judith changed the subject and took up Tommy's case.

"He looks a nice little chap, and he's got a lovely complexion," said she.

"It don't matter how he's complected. He's a Slick," said Mrs. Morris, with decision. "And being a Slick ain't no recommend for a church member; he's got brothers that has been in gaol, that young one has; there's Indian blood in the Slicks. Did you hear any noise when Tommy passed? No, nor you never will. He goes pad, pad along, regular flat-footed Indian fashion—all the Slicks do—no good honest heel-and-toe about them. One of his sisters, the one married over Kneeland way, is just like a squaw for all the world. They say it was the great-great-grandmother on the Slick side was a squaw—she came from near Brantford."

"I thought Indians were all dark-skinned," ventured Judith, "and that boy certainly—"

"Well, if his face ain't complected like them, you can depend on it his heart is," interrupted Mrs. Morris, in a tone suggestive of rising temper.

"There's the Slick house now," she said in a voice which indicated that the name of Slick was malodorous to her. She pointed to a rickety, rough plaster house which they were passing. In the doorway stood a frowsy woman, her arms akimbo, her fingers and palms stained a deep purple.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Slick. Been dyeing?" said Mrs. Morris, affably, as they came abreast of her.

"Good day. Yes," said the woman, curtly.

Upon the clothes-line at the end of the house some garments, dipped in purple dye, hung drying.

"Them 'll streak when they dry," said Mrs. Morris, in the discriminating tone of one who knows.

Judith wondered vaguely where she had seen that peculiar purple colour; later she remembered that the outside of the tin pail Tommy Slick carried, had been smeared with it.

Hiram Green greeted them from his shop

door as they passed, and Bill Aikins' wife gave them a brisk salutation, without pausing in her work of "sweeping up" her door steps. They passed the school-house; the children were out at recess. Mrs. Morris' brow contracted, and her voice was a little querulous when she spoke next.

"Seems to me children grow powerful noisy these times" she said. "I disremember that they used to be so when I was little."

They turned the corner. Hiram Green's house was the last one in the village. It was a brick house, built flush with the street. It had six windows in front, and these windows had been considered very original and genteel, when Hiram had them put in. For, instead of being the ordinary oblong windows, the tops of these were semicircular. Hiram had intended at first to have the semicircle filled with glass, but decided, from economic reasons, to substitute wood. These wooden tops conveyed the impression of the windows having eyebrows, and gave a supercilious air to the whole house, which was a very good indication of the attitude of Hiram Green and his daughters to their neighbours. There *was* a Mrs. Green, but she was one of those hard-worked nonentities, never considered in the polity of the household save as a labour-saving agent. The Misses Green were usually

to be seen on a fine afternoon either on the "stoop," or by the open parlour windows. Mrs. Green was never visible; she was obliterated beneath the burden of work she bore upon her patient shoulders.

The Misses Green were out in force as Judith and Mrs. Morris went by. Enshrined in their midst was a sallow young Methodist clergyman, somewhat meagre-looking, but with a countenance full of content. He fairly gaped after Judith. Mrs. Morris greeted the Misses Green coldly. She did not like them. Their mother and Mrs. Morris had been friends in girlhood, and Mrs. Morris had a poor opinion of her old friend's daughters. "Hester Green's got no spunk or she would not stand it," she said with asperity, and added, "Poor thing!"

Mrs. Green's wistful eyes looked at them from the kitchen window, where she was frying crullers for the minister's tea. But she did not think of her own lot as being harder than Mrs. Morris'—far from it.

"Poor Jane, trapesing along with a strange girl, and me got four daughters," she said to herself, and dropped a bit of potato into the bubbling fat to see if it was at the proper temperature.

Perhaps Mrs. Green's daughters as well as

their "ways" were rocks of offence to Mrs. Morris, yet they were truly a poor possession to covet.

A short walk, and then Judith and Mrs. Morris were at the foot of the hill-side. They entered Andrew's domain; and found, as they closed the gate, that Miss Myers and Andrew had come to meet them.

Andrew had longed intensely during the four days just gone to see Judith again. So extravagant had his desire for this been, that when he saw her coming afar off, he felt almost a regret. The anticipation had been so satisfying that he felt a stifled fear, lest the vision be found to surpass the real. But when she gave him her hand, and looked at him, straight from her honest eyes into his—well, then he knew no dream could be so dear as the sweet reality. And from that moment the world put on a different countenance to those two—the sky, the water, the clouds, and the earth's bloom-scented face all changed.

As they turned to follow Miss Myers and Mrs. Morris they were a little silent. A quieting hand seemed to have been laid in benediction upon their hasty pulses. An awe, not of each other, but of the holy realm they felt they were entering, fell upon them. From the portals of

that Promised Land there seemed to issue a gentle but compelling voice, bidding them tread gently, for the place whereon they stood was holy ground. In Andrew's heart there surged a new strength, a strong tide of resolution. In Judith's heart there sprang to life many sweet hopes, savoured and sanctified almost to pain, by a new sweet fear.

Their voices softened. Andrew's tones seemed informed with a new meaning. Judith's accents held a hint of appeal.

But this transformation was unacknowledged by each of them. Judith's eyes still met his bravely, and he constrained himself to self-control. But what a glorified place that linden-laden hill-side had become!

Judith laughed out happily.

"I am happy!" she said, out of sheer light-heartedness. "Are you?"

Andrew drew his breath in swiftly, and closed his lips firmly a moment, as to repress some words that strove for utterance.

"Yes, I should think I am," he said.

They passed under the apple-tree by the garden gate. Its petals seemed almost spent—the life of the apple blossom is short. But how much sweeter the spot, and the tree, when she stood beneath it, than ever it had been before in all

its glory and bloom ! They were in the garden ; the old sun-dial with the linden tree beside it stood in the sunshine. Judith's eyes filled with happy tears, which Andrew did not see ; he only thought her eyes were bright. It seemed to her that her spirit had found its natal place here on the hill. These aromatic breaths from the box, the perfume of the violets, the odour of the cherry blossom, the sound of the birds, the rustle of the leaves—surely these were the scents and sounds of home. •

“Do you know what Mrs. Browning says of such a tree ?” she asked.

“No ; tell me.”

“I do not know if I can remember it. I'll try. I—” (She was nervous—she who had sung to the Kaiser !) Then she repeated, her voice trembling a little—

“Here a linden tree stood, bright'ning
All adown its silver rind ;
For as some trees draw the lightning,
So this tree, unto my mind,
Drew to earth the blessed sunshine
From the sky where it was shrined.”

“I think it is you who have drawn down the sunshine,” he said. “Anyhow, it is always sunshine where you are.”

She was amazed at the joy which flooded her heart at this commonplace compliment. They loitered about the garden until Miss Myers summoned them to tea. Judith came in almost shyly before these two country women, who, to tell the truth, had felt the freeer to enjoy themselves in her absence.

Miss Myers took her into a bedroom to lay off her hat. It was cool, quiet, large, with corners already growing dusky in the fading light. A huge bed heaped high with feathers was covered with a snowy coverlet. Some tall geraniums with fragrant, fern-like leaves stood in the windows; a dark, polished table filled one angle. The mirror, a little square of dim glass, was set in a polished mahogany frame, and placed upon a high chest of drawers of the same rich dusky wood.

There was something pure, still, almost ascetic, in the large bare room. Its spotlessness seemed to diffuse a sense of restful peace. One would have said no weary eyes had ever held vain vigil here, that no restless heart had here sought slumber without finding it.

Judith somehow felt like lowering her voice. She took off her hat and patted her hair solicitously as every normal woman does. She could only see her face in the mirror, nothing

more, not even the purple and yellow pansies in the breast of her yellow frock. She touched them gently. Andrew had picked them for her in the garden.

"Am I right?" she asked, looking at Miss Myers.

"Couldn't be improved," said Miss Myers, heartily, upon whom Judith's interest in the garden and evident desire to please had made quite an impression in the last few minutes.

So they went back to the sitting-room together, when Miss Myers excused herself for a few minutes whilst she went to give the finishing touches to her table--to see that the girl had set it properly, get out the best china and the silver teapot, the richest fruit-cake, the finest canned peaches, and fill the cream ewer with the thickest of cream.

Andrew was leaning against a window case-ment as Judith entered the room. The broad window-sills were full of flowers; the heavy old red curtains were pushed far back to the sills, making a dusky background for Andrew's tall figure in its rusty velveteens. Judith advanced toward him, her yellow frock looking almost white in the waning light, the purple heartsease a dark blot upon her breast.

"Isn't that plant pretty?" she asked Mrs.

Morris, feeling a nervous desire to include her in the conversation—she felt so much alone with Andrew.

"Which?" asked Mrs. Morris, joining them at the window. "The 'Aaron's Beard' or the 'Jacob's Ladder'?"

"I mean this hanging plant," said Judith.

"Oh, the 'Mother of Millions'; yes, it's real handsome," said Mrs. Morris, looking at the luxuriant pot of Kenilworth Ivy over which Judith was bending.

"What a funny name!" said Judith.

"Oh, it don't make much difference about the names of 'em," returned Mrs. Morris. "Only so long as you know 'em by 'em."

Miss Myers entered, and they followed her to the dining-room.

Miss Myers was reputedly the most forehanded house-keeper in Ovid, and supposed to set the best table of any one in the village, "and no thanks to her for it; she's got plenty to do with"—as her neighbours often said. But in spite of her liberal house-keeping, Miss Myers "looked well to the ways of her household"; there were no small channels of waste permitted under her *régime*.

Judith was charmed with everything—the chicken and ham, which Andrew deftly dis-

pensed; the huge glass dish of peaches, preserved whole, and with a few long green peach-leaves put with them to flavour them; the snowy white cream-cheese set on a bed of parsley; the young lettuce fresh gathered from the garden (of which Mrs. Morris said later, "It was just murdering them lettuce to pick 'em so young"); the black fruit cake; and the bread browned in Miss Myers' brick oven.

A cat sprang upon the sill of the open window, and after some pretence of surprise (at which Andrew raised his eyebrows and looked at Judith), Miss Myers gave it a saucer of milk on the window-ledge. Strangely enough there happened to be an extra saucer handy. Judith sat demurely, feeling that there never had been such a joke as she and Andrew perceived in Miss Myers' poor pretence of astonishment at the cat's daring. The cat finished her milk, and sat washing her face industriously.

Rufus sat sedately beside his master's chair, with a look almost of sanctity in his big hazel eyes. Rufus never begged, but he shifted his forepaws uneasily and swept his banner of a tail along the floor, mutely importunate. Later on Judith learned this was the regular performance of these two favourites. There were other dogs about the place, and barn cats in

plenty, but these two chosen ones had the high seats in the synagogue.

There were antlers between the windows, and over the side table, and above the doors; a trophy of wild ducks and water fowl was mounted upon a beautiful hard-wood panel; foxes' masks grinned from the corners. And when they passed out to the hall, there was the old musket, the sword with its crimson sash, a pair of rusty spurs and a cartridge belt, all hung upon the huge horns of the one moose which Andrew's gun had brought down.

An incident at the table had disturbed Judith very much. In response to a request for salt, she had handed Andrew some, and Mrs. Morris promptly said:

"Well, you shouldn't have done that. That's a bad oming. 'Help one to salt, help them to sorrow.' That's terrible unlucky."

"Oh, Mr. Cutler," said Judith, "do you think I've given you sorrow?"

"No," said Andrew. "No, indeed; I don't believe any of those old sayings." Miss Myers was silent.

"Well," said Mrs. Morris, "I don't know; them things seems bore out sometimes. There was young Henry Braddon; he keeps post-office now" (this to Judith) "and one day his mother

gave him some salt to salt the cattle. 'Help one to salt, help one to sorrow,' says he, and off he went, and when he come back his mother lay in the porch, took with the stroke she died of."

Judith's face was pale and startled.

"Seems to me," said Andrew, dryly, feeling as if he would like to choke Mrs. Morris—"seems to me the brunt of that bad luck fell on her."

"I wish I'd never seen salt," said Judith. "Do you think any bad luck will come of it?"

"Nonsense," said Andrew, and somehow his manlike scorn did much to reassure Judith, but when the others were not looking, she pushed the offending salt as far as possible from her.

Mr. Morris was to call for them, and he arrived very soon, but in the meantime the evening had grown a little chill, and Judith had no wrap. She denied feeling cold, but as they stood in the porch she shivered. Andrew ran in and brought out a huge homespun shawl and bundled her up in it; her face, in contrast to its heavy rough folds, looked very delicate and white.

She was seated alone in the second seat of the democrat waggon. Andrew came to her side; his eyes were nearly on a level with hers.

"You never showed me the birds' nests!" she said.

"Oh, you must come back and see those," he said eagerly. "You will come back?"

"As often as Miss Myers will let me," said Judith, unaffectedly. "And"—she coloured a little—"you'll come and see my bird's nest in the field?"

"Yes, to-morrow," said Andrew.

Mr. Morris shook the reins over the old sorrel. Judith bent over giving Andrew her hand.

"Mr. Cutler," she said hastily, "you don't think I gave you sorrow?"

"No," he said, some deep feeling making his voice intense in its quiet strength. "No, you give me—" The old sorrel was eager to get back to her slim-fetlocked daughter, and she sprang forward. Judith's hand seemed torn from him: his sentence was left incomplete.

"Good-night," he said.

"Good-night, good-night," called Judith in return.

CHAPTER VII.

"Yet love, mere love, is beautiful indeed,
And worthy of acceptance."

NEXT day the village was stirred to its depths when Hiram Green passed through the streets, bringing from his pasture his white horse, striped with purple paint, or dye, until it looked like an exotic zebra.

With this horse he brought his groceries from town; behind it many a school-teacher had driven in vainglorious ease. Hiram had gone for it that day with intent to do the little Methodist parson honour, by taking him for a drive, a plan necessarily postponed by the hilarious appearance of the horse, which looked out from a pair of artistically drawn purple spectacles upon the excitement which its appearance created.

Hiram was furious, the Misses Green were rampant, the parson piously indignant, and even meek Mrs. Green lifted up her voice in wrath.

The horse was escorted to the barn-yard, to be subjected to such a course of scrubbing as never

fell to the lot of an Ovidian horse before; but aniline dyes are hard to eradicate. That day, and for many days after, the horse went about contentedly in a pale purple coat.

There was no direct evidence to convict any one of the prank; but Hiram had refused to give the Slick family any further credit at his store, and from the clothes-line of the Slick house, some garments, dipped in purple dye, flaunted derisively in the breeze. Tommy Slick and Nip went about looking as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths; and all Mrs. Slick was ever heard to say about the matter was:

"Let 'em come to me and just as much as hint that Tommy done it! I'll—but just let 'em once, that's all."

And whilst nobody showed a disposition to hinder any one else from making the accusation, still no one volunteered to voice the general opinion regarding the matter to Mrs. Slick. Besides, secretly, every one felt a sort of sneaking satisfaction over the matter.

Andrew and Judith, to confess the truth, thought it a huge joke, and at Judith's instigation, they made a long journey across the fields to Hiram's pasture lot, to see the horse; and when they beheld him placidly purple, munching away in supreme content, they laughed till their voices rang out through the wood.

Judith recalled the purple smears on Tommy's pail the day she had met him, and felt an unholy joy of participation in the plot. Judith didn't like the Greens. As she and Mrs. Morris passed them going to Andrew's, one sentence had rung out clearly to Judith's ears: "My! Ain't she pinched!" That was enough. The Greens never found favour in the eyes of Judith.

Andrew, as he had promised to do, went to see Judith's bird's nest the day after her visit to his farm. At that meeting, and in many more such sweet hours which followed, Judith and Andrew lived in the joy of the moment. Their hearts were young, the world was fresh and fair; the one loved deeply, and the other—well—for the time she had forgotten her ambition, forgotten the marvellous gift that made holy the air she breathed, or only remembered it for the pleasure it gave this young countryman; she had forgotten that her name was famous, whispered from lip to lip throughout the musical world; she had forgotten the intoxication of success, the wine of applause; she had forgotten the great debt she owed the man who had made her what she was, a debt that she could only requite in one way, by singing. So surely she must have sipped some *Nepenthe* of present

happiness or future hope! Lotos lands are very sweet, but rarely so satisfying as these two found them.

It seems to outrage our sense of proportion, to think of a young farmer aspiring to the hand of one who showed every promise of being the world's *prima donna*. To us it seems grotesque almost, and Andrew seems ridiculously egotistical in hoping that this song-bird would abide in his love-woven cage of rushes, when the doors of so many golden nets were open to her. But Andrew's daring was perhaps excusable.

It is true, her voice had led him to her first, and he always heard it as a devotee might hear the voices of angels strike through his prayers: but after that first meeting, Andrew had always seen the *woman* in her, not the songstress. He did not love her for her singing, her beauty, nor her gentle breeding. He loved her for herself—the truest love of all. For a love founded upon any gift is a frail thing, a banner hung upon a reed. The reed may break, and the banner no longer lifted up may not care to enwrap the broken stem which before upheld it. What does England's greatest woman poet say?

“If thou must love me, let it be for naught
Except for love's sake only.”

"For love's sake only"—that should be the supreme reason of every passion. Love, "the fulfilling of the law," the beginning and end of all things.

And thus, inasmuch as this great justification was his, Andrew was justified.

Nor did he seek with rude hands to snatch his happiness hastily. As one pauses with hushed heart, when he comes in woodland places upon some new sweet flower, or sees through a cleft of the mountains the glory of the sun, or gathers to his breast some soul-satisfying truth, so Andrew paused ere raising the cup of this great joy to his lips. He felt he must purify his hands ere he advanced to stretch them forth for the draught. And should it be denied him?

Thought ceased there—beyond was chaos.

And Judith gathered the flowers of the hour with eager fingers, trembling with new joy, finding in their perfume complete satisfaction, looking neither before nor after, as a butterfly revels in the sunshine, forgetting the chill of by-gone days, unrecking of the bitter blasts to come.

The days became weeks, and the earth grew glad with fruits and flowers and growing grain. During all this time Judith was learning of the

people about her, prying with her tender eyes into the pathos of their narrow lives, appreciating keenly the unconscious humour displayed in their processes of thought, marvelling at their stolid disregard of the Beautiful.

Rufus and the grey cat knew her well, and Miss Myers was devoted to her.

Mrs. Morris and Miss Myers had grounded her thoroughly in the family history of the villagers, and she knew as much about them as about the others, for Miss Myers told her about Mrs. Morris, and *vice versa*.

And Judith had developed a keen interest in all the doings of the village people, of whom old Sam Symmons was her favourite, the redoubtable Tommy Slick being a good second. Old Sam liked her, and prophesied freely that she would soon be mistress of Andrew Cutler's house. Suse pretended not to be much impressed with Judith; it was not to be expected that any marriageable girl in the neighbourhood would particularly admire the strange woman who had led away captive the most eligible man for miles around, and, besides, Suse had a love affair of her own upon her hands. The rest of the village girls contented themselves with giggling when Andrew and Judith passed, whispering among themselves

that "There didn't seem to be much sign of Miss Myers moving out, and if she was going to live with Andrew and his wife, it was as well he hadn't chosen any of *them*, for *they* wouldn't stand *that*"—reflections which consoled them very much evidently, and which, being entirely harmless to any one else, were quite admissible.

Judith thought this rustic life very quaint and idyllic to look at—like one of Hardy's stories, only bearing the same relation to a story that a game of chess, played as they play it sometimes in the East, with living pawns, does to the more prosaic pastime pondered over upon a table.

The village appealed to her as a skilfully set scene, begirt by a beautiful background of changing fields and sky—a stage whereon was enacted an interminable drama, in whose scenes all the constituents of humble life were blended.

It never occurred to her that she was the heroine of the story—the queen of the animated chess board, an actress in the life play. Poor Judith! She thought herself only a spectator, and, as such, deemed herself secure from all the pains and penalties of the play.

Judith always laughed, though sometimes for shame she strove to hide the laughter when Tommy Slick was before the footlights. Tommy

had been making a hilarious record for himself at school. To begin with, Tommy was nearly ten years old, and had been allowed to run wild at home, hence he was utterly ignorant of the world of letters, but wide awake to the vital facts in the world of men; for Tommy's intellect was precocious and practical.

Tommy's father was wont to say of this, his youngest hope, "Tommy hain't much of a letter sharp, but he'd be good on a horse trade," and his judgment was about correct. His mother, as a preliminary to Tommy's appearance, called upon Suse, and informed her that "Tommy was a right smart young un, but delikit." Of the first fact Suse was well aware; of the truth of the latter statement she never could convince herself. Did she not, in common with the rest of the village, remember well the day when Tommy and his father furnished forth entertainment for the whole community? The fashion of it did not suggest any extreme debility upon Tommy's part. It was in this wise:

One day Tommy, having incited his irascible father even more than usual, perceived blood in his parent's eye, and concluded to run. The chase led up the village street, to the vacant lot where the old store had been burned down. The fleet and flying Tommy, turning here, had

perceived his father in full pursuit, and, evidently doubting his own staying powers, had taken to a tree, shinning up a tall, slender, swaying poplar with precocious celerity. He climbed to the very top, and, undaunted by the slenderness of his perch (for the tree bent beneath his weight as a stalk of grain beneath a bird), clung comfortably there, whilst his father, unable to follow up the slender stem, stood at the foot, and alternately threatened, cajoled and cursed. When he resorted to swearing as a safety valve for his wrath, Tommy exchanged oaths genially and freely with him, until Slick, Sen., in a paroxysm of rage, shook the tree continuously and violently, so that Tommy took an earthward flight, fortunately for him landing on a pile of old straw.

His father, somewhat cooled down by the spectacle of Tommy shooting through the air, approached him, and as a preliminary, asked him if he was hurt. This gave Tommy an opportunity which he at once improved. He made no reply.

And thereupon Suse and the rest of the Ovidians were regaled by seeing Tommy's father carrying his son home tenderly, stepping carefully so as not to jar the presumably broken bones.

This progress Tommy rendered as arduous as

possible, by lying perfectly limp in his father's arms; in fact, making himself dead weight, and letting his long legs dangle helplessly down, to meet his father's knee-caps, or shins, at every step, with the brass toes of his heavy boots. It was not reported that Tommy suffered much from this experience.

Tommy had a fine fund of profanity, which served as a spicy garnish to his deep sense of humour, a genial and easy self-possession, unfailing confidence in his own powers, and a dog he was willing to back against any other in the village, except Hiram Green's brindle bull pup.

The first day Tommy went to school, Suse had the "infant" class up before one of the alphabet tablets by the window, and Tommy, affable and completely at ease, came with them. Most children—Ovidian children—when they came to school for the first time, were somewhat abashed by the novelty of their surroundings, given to starting at every sound, stumbling over the legs of desks, and getting hopelessly entangled with the other pupils, in their efforts to obliterate themselves from the teacher's notice. Not so, Tommy. No teacher ever born had terrors for him; the legs outstretched to trip him on his way up the aisle, were withdrawn, tingling from the kicks of Tommy's brass toes. When he was

half-way up the aisle, it occurred to him to take a short-cut, so he wriggled between two desks, and landed with a slide over the third, to find most of the class assembled. A sharp pinch of an arm, his elbow applied vigorously to a side, a vicious kick upon a shin, cleared his way of three boys. Then he planted himself at the head of the class, next Suse, and prepared to receive the seeds of knowledge.

But his eyes wandered, first with a look all about, then abstractedly to the window. But the abstraction vanished, and a look of intense eagerness made his eyes bright, as they bent in absorbed interest upon one spot, where his disreputable dog, who had followed him to school, *à la* Mary's sheep, was harassing the life out of a fat and grunting pig, which he had, in his own proper person, surrounded; for, heading off the pig in whatever direction she turned, he seemingly converted himself into twenty disreputable dogs. Having bewildered the pig with a few lightning rushes round it, with a sharp nip at its tail, ears, or nose, as he could best get in a flying bite, he planted himself like a lion in the way, and yelped red-mouthed derision and insult at the impotent foe, who was too fat to follow, either mentally or bodily, the gyrations of its agile tormentor.

"Tommy!" said Suse. (Tommy paid no heed.) "Tommy!" repeated she, more imperatively. (No sign from Tommy.) "Tommy Slick!!" accentuating her voice by a sharp rap of her pointer on a desk. Just then the owner of the pig came along, kicked Nip, and Tommy came back to sublunary affairs.

"All right, Suse," he said obligingly, "I'm yer man."

At that Suse felt the foundations of her throne tottering.

In the afternoon, mindful of the temptations of the window, she had Tommy's class up before the blackboard, where, printing the alphabet a letter at a time, she made the class name them. Tommy kept his attention pretty closely fixed until N was reached; then he became absent-minded. He was meditating his revenge upon the pig's owner for kicking Nip. The only step he had decided upon was to try conclusions, immediately after school, with the man's son. The latter was two years older than Tommy, and a good half-head taller, but Tommy never considered such paltry details when an affront to Nip was to be wiped out.

Tommy's mind was engrossed with further plans when Suse, after elaborately executing a capital S upon the blackboard, addressed him, not without some trepidation.

"Tommy, that's S." (No response.)

"Tommy," she said with angry dignity, "you must look at the blackboard. That letter is S."

"Oh, is it?" said Tommy, in a pleasantly interested tone, "I always did wonder what the little crooked devil was." For the remainder of Tommy's first day at school Suse felt that her glory was a delusion and a snare.

Judith carefully concealed from Mrs. Morris her enjoyment of Tommy's pranks, the former having no patience with "them two imps," as she designated Tommy and Nip. For, once, Mrs. Morris had been expecting company, and the better to entertain them, had baked a batch of pumpkin pies, it being the season when such delicacies were in order. She set them out on a bench in the front porch to cool, taking the precaution to make sure that the collie and the cat were safe in the kitchen.

When Mrs. Morris returned, some half-hour later, she found a row of empty pie plates, and sitting beside them, looking at them with the dissatisfied expression of a dog still hungry, was Tommy Slick's dog Nip. Nip fled from the face of Mrs. Morris towards Andrew's woods, where Tommy was gathering hickory nuts, sped upon his way by an earthen flower pot flung with a vigorous but inaccurate hand.

Ever since that day Mrs. Morris had cherished a deep hatred of Tommy and his dog.

Judith, as the days passed, was very happy; but happy in a blind, unreasoning fashion. With persistent self-delusion she put behind her the fact that this dream-like summer was but an interlude in her life. True, at first she persistently took short views, and only interested herself in matters a day or two beyond the present, but gradually she slipped into the habit of speaking and thinking as if she were to be there always.

Now and then there were times when the colder light of reason showed her plainly how factitious this evanescent happiness was. These moods came upon her like so many physical shocks, leaving her feeling much older, much quieter, robbing her life of radiance and giving her almost a distaste for the simple scenes which had created delusions which bade fair to cost her so dear. Sometimes when the clear radiance of the moon shone in upon her at night, she lay and thought of the brilliant scenes, the well-nigh certain triumphs which awaited her—for, immature as she might be in some things, she was mistress of her art and *knew* it, but her cheeks no longer flushed as they had wont to do, her eyes no longer kindled at the dream.

instead, her face set into a cold dignity and her eyes looked out in the moonlight, out into the future with a look of prescient martyrdom—the martyrdom of lonely Genius! The look of those whose brows smooth themselves for the crown of solitary success, that coronal which has so often crushed its wearer, so often obscured the eyes it overshadowed, so that they no longer beheld peace and joy!

But at the first sound of Andrew's footsteps, always eager, hasty, hopeful as they approached her, these shadows vanished, and in their place shone the dawn of a newer light.

She had never before been considered as a woman, but always as a singer; and her womanhood recognizing the tribute paid to it, stirred into life, responded to the feeling which evoked it, and demanded right of way.

There is something dominant in the woman-heart when roused. Judith's nature held deeper depths than she herself wot of—sweet springs for the lilies of love to grow in; reservoirs of feeling, long unsuspected, but now brimming to the brink, threatening to break every barrier, and flood their way over the ruin of her life schemes, her painfully constructed temple of Art, the airy fabric of her ambition; but one obstacle could not be swept aside—the benefits

received. When Judith thought of what she owed her manager, then her heart grew faint within her; but, as excessive pain at length numbs sensation, so this thought became one of the accepted facts of her life, the life she was enjoying so much.

And the days were so long, and so sweet, that it seemed impossible that the end would ever come. But it was already midsummer, the harvest fields were brightening beneath the sun, the little school-house was closed for the summer holidays; from the orchards came the odour of ripe harvest apples, and the sun-bonneted women gathered wild raspberries from the fences, or picked currants in the garden.

And Judith had herself grown infinitely charming; for she was not letting all the sunshine slip from her. As the ruby crystal holds the rays which gives it its roseate charm, so Judith was absorbing the beauties about her, and giving them forth in a gentle radiation of womanly graces.

When one part of a nature is nurtured to the exclusion of the rest, it is not strange that the whole suffers somewhat. Judith, taught only to sing, to look well, to win applause by merit, or clever *finesse*, had known perhaps too little of real womanliness, save the intuitional impulses

of her strong, sweet nature. She was wont to be a little petulant, a little self-absorbed, and a little, just a little, arrogant. These blemishes had been chastened into a sweet womanliness, capricious perhaps, but charming. Not but what there were tempests in her summer. As the summer showers swept across the fields, so tears crossed her happy dream.

The interest she took in every detail of his daily occupation amused and touched Andrew very much, but now and then he, in a measure, misunderstood her, which was not wonderful, considering how widely severed their modes of life and methods of thought had been. Once he laughed at some views she was expressing, grave conclusions she had arrived at after long thought and minute observation. Andrew laughed outright. Her remarks related to one of the simplest facts of outdoor life, always so well known to Andrew that he hardly apprehended the marvel of it. At his laugh the colour flooded her face, tears sprang to her eyes, she was wounded to the quick. She tried to disguise her feelings as bravely as possible, fighting off a burst of hysteric tears, making commonplace remarks in a tone strained and muffled by reason of the lump in her throat. Andrew's heart ached with regret. He wanted

to take her in his arms, and holding her to his breast win from her a silent pardon, offer her a mute but eloquent apology. He dare not yet. A quick sense of her childishness in some matters came to him with knowledge that if ever he won her, he must be prepared to be patient, prepared to learn much, to teach her many things. Judith saw that he had noticed her distress, knew he was sorry, and tried in an unselfish woman's way, to make him think that she had not minded. The very tenderness which Andrew's voice and manner assumed, pressed home the sting of that laugh. As they parted that night, the tears were heavy beneath Judith's lids. For a fleeting moment as they said good-night, she looked at him. She was standing within the shadow of the porch, but the star-shine revealed those tears.

"My poor little girl, I'm so sorry," said Andrew, his dark face pale in the dusk.

"It doesn't matter, really. I think my head aches—I mean—good night," she said.

"You are not angry?" Andrew's voice was chill with despair, regret.

"No, no—oh, I'm not angry, not a bit, I—" He caught her hands, her composure was failing her.

"Oh, *do* let me go," she half whispered, "you

are bad to me." Then she fled. Andrew turned away, white to the lips.

When they met again, the joy of seeing each other made them happy. Judith was so lovingly eager to make him forget her last words to him, he was so tenderly anxious not to wound her, and each was a little in awe of the other. For they had learned one of the most sacred lessons of love, learned what a terrible power to inflict suffering each held over the other. But their love was sanctified by this dual illumination, and as their eyes met, a little shyly, now and then, there seemed to pass between them a two-fold message, a promise and a plea.

And they parted again, with definite words of love still unspoken.

But the time was not far off. Andrew's arms were yearning for their birthright, and Judith's head was weary for his breast.

Yet fears assailed her, too. One's head may be sore weary for the pillow, yet the thought of frightsome dreams may make one tremble on the verge of rest, and hesitate ere yielding to the sweetest slumber.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Ho, ye who seek saving,
Go no further. Come hither, for have we not found it?
Here is the House of Fulfilment of Craving;
Here is the Cup with the roses around it,
The world's wound well healed, and the balm that
hath bound it."

"I'm going to church next Sunday," said Judith to Andrew, as they walked through the chestnut woods. It was evening. Far away beyond the level fields an after-glow opulent in gold was streaming up over the sky—a radiance, living, like the memory of love, long after its source had vanished from the view. The day had been intensely warm, and the wood was full of the pungent odours of leaves, mingled with the sweeter scent of dying wild roses.

Coming to them faintly from far-off fields they could hear the lowing of thirsty cows, eager to be let out of their pastures to the ponds. And from the grass meadow which bordered the chestnut woods came the crop-cropping of Andrew's horses grazing greedily now that the heat of the day had declined.

Judith wore a white frock, and had a bunch of somewhat limp-looking ferns in her hand. It was impossible for her to leave the woods without some spoil. Andrew walked by her side, tall and brown, his cap pushed far back upon his head, a measureless content within his eyes. Rufus followed sedately, keeping a wary look-out from the corner of his eye for squirrels and rabbits.

Sleepy, white-winged moths were fluttering aimlessly hither and thither amid the grasses, and now and then a bird's call rang through the trees.

"Going to church?" said Andrew. "Isn't that a new idea?"

"Yes," said Judith, a little wistfully. "Mrs. Morris wants me to, and—I wish I was good."

Andrew's face was very tender as he turned towards her. "I don't think you are such a great sinner."

She looked at him half happily, half doubtfully. "Well, I'm going anyhow; Mrs. Morris seems so anxious about it."

"I'll go, too, then."

"Oh, will you?"

"Yes."

They walked on a few moments in silence; then Andrew said:

"Will you sing in church?"

"Oh," said Judith, "they'll have singing! I hadn't thought of it. Yes, I'll sing with the rest."

Andrew chuckled.

"What is it?" demanded Miss Moore, drawing her level brows together in interrogation.

"Oh, nothing," said Andrew.

"Yes, it is something."

"No, really."

"You were laughing at me."

"No, honestly, I wasn't."

"Certain?" Miss Moore looked at him suspiciously.

"Come and look at the horses," said Andrew.

So they crossed from the path, through the narrow belt of trees to the pasture fence, and presently, in answer to Andrew's calls, the horses came trotting up one by one, standing shyly and sniffing with outstretched noses at Andrew's hand. He crossed the fence into the field and fed them with bunches of grass. Judith looked on longingly.

"Could I come over?" she asked doubtfully.

"Yes, indeed," he said. "Do."

"Turn your back, then."

Andrew obeyed promptly, and Miss Moore mounted slowly to the top rail, where she stood

uncertainly a moment. It slipped, she gave a little cry, and the next instant Andrew had lifted her lightly down. He held her for a second in his arms; each felt the tremour of the other's heart, and then she was released and was standing trembling by his side. The horses pricked their ears and eyed her nervously, and Andrew gazed down at her with his heart in his eyes.

She held out one of her ferns to the horses, shrinking a little closer to Andrew as they drew near to sniff at it with their velvety muzzles. One after another lipped at the fern, but would not take it.

"They won't eat that," said Andrew, and his voice was very gentle. "Offer them this."

So Judith held out the grass he gave her, catching hold of his sleeve like a child for protection when his big Clydesdale colt stretched out his head towards her. And presently the horses left them one by one, till all were gone except Andrew's clean-limbed bay, upon whose back the wet mark of the saddle was yet visible, for Andrew had ridden into town that afternoon.

And Judith grew bolder and patted its soft nose and beautiful neck, and Andrew watching her thought that nowhere, surely nowhere, in all the wide world was there a sweeter woman

than this. And he longed to question the universe, if within all its realm there was anything so lovely as the fragile hands which showed so white against Rob Roy's arching neck.

The twilight deepened. A little wistful wind rippled through the long meadow-grass.

"We must go," said Andrew, "or the dew will wet you."

"Oh, it wouldn't hurt me," said Judith.

"Better not risk it," said Andrew. So they walked along within the meadow to the gate, Rob Roy following them, every now and then touching Andrew's shoulder with his outstretched nose. He stood whilst the bars were taken down, and whinnied softly as they left him. "What a dear fellow he is," said Judith.

They soon reached the Morris house, where Mr. Morris was mending a bridle on the doorstep, and Mrs. Morris in the fading light was busy carrying out a plan to frustrate the assaults of the chickens upon her flower beds: for every chicken in Mrs. Morris's possession seemed inspired with an evil desire to scratch up her seedlings so soon as she transplanted them from the boxes in the kitchen to the beds in front of the house. So between the rows of balsams and marigolds and amongst the ruby-

stemmed seedlings of the prince's feather, Mrs. Morris had stuck in bits of shingles.

"There," said Mrs. Morris, straightening herself after plunging her last piece into the earth. "There! I guess them chickens has got their work cut out for them before they root out them plants. They do seem to be possessed by evil speerits, them chickens! That's the third planting of marigolds, and what prince's feather there is left is only what sowed itself last year and came up late. My sakes! wasn't it hot in town to-day, Andrew?"

"Yes," said Andrew, from where he stood leaning against the porch.

Judith was standing by Mrs. Morris, looking at the flower beds where each little seedling was surrounded by a palisade of narrow strips of shingle.

Mrs. Morris brought out some chairs, and they sat talking in the dusk while the summer moon grew out of the horizon, and slowly, slowly sailed aloft, paling as it attained its height, till from a glowing disk of yellow it changed to a shadowless silver shield.

"Won't you sing to us, Miss Moore?" asked Andrew.

"Yes, do," urged Mrs. Morris.

"What will I sing?" asked Judith, but with-

out waiting for an answer began. She sang an Italian love-song, a masterpiece of passion and pain—sang it as perhaps no living woman could sing it, making music in such fashion that the hearts of her hearers were melted within them, voicing in it all the timorous new joy, the half-happy fears that filled her heart, with somewhat of the poignant pathos of renunciation. Some one says, "Music is the counterpart of life in spirit speech," and it would seem that in one perfect song there may be condensed all the emotion of life and love, all the pathos of pain and parting. As the song died away Andrew gave a long sigh. The pleasure of such music oftentimes prolongs itself to pain. Perhaps it was some recognition of the great value of Judith's gift of song, perhaps it was because she sang familiarly an unknown tongue that made Andrew suddenly feel the chill of a great gulf fixed between them. The arms which had held her for a moment in the pasture-field yearned with ineffable longing for a joy denied them.

But Judith was singing again, "The Angels' Serenade," one of the loveliest things ever written. When she finished there was a silence. Mrs. Morris' hard-worked hands were clasped tremblingly together, tears were streaming over her face, her heart was yearning towards the little mounds in the unkempt churchyard.

"Hannah," said her grey-haired husband, laying his hand upon her shoulder. Their eyes met. That was all; but dumbly they had shared the cup of their sorrow. A bitter communion, one would say, yet good to make strong the spirit, as the better barks strengthen the body.

And a few minutes later Mrs. Morris slipped away into the house, perhaps to open that shrine where were hidden some tiny half-worn garments, perhaps out of sympathy for the two young people who might wish to be alone; and when Judith began to sing again, she and Andrew were alone, for Mr. Morris, with lumbering attempts at caution, had followed his wife.

Andrew's heart was aching with inexplicable pain. Judith was singing an old theme, composed long since by some frocked and cowed musician, whose rigid vows and barren life could not quite suppress the dream of music within his soul. It was a simple and austere melody, yet endued with a peculiar pathos, the yearning of a defrauded life for the joy that should have crowned it, the regret of a barren present for a fruitful past, the wail of the must be for the might have been.

And as she sang, the gulf which Andrew had

perceived between them widened into a great black sea, across which her voice came to him where he stood alone forever upon the shore; and just as the pain grew too poignant to be borne, a bat darted near them, Judith gave a frightened cry and fled to his side, and the gulf was bridged in a second by a strong strand knit of a woman's foolish fear and a man's reassuring word.

And soon a light shone down from an upstairs window. Judith started up. "You must go straight away home," she said, "Mrs. Morris has gone to her room."

"Come as far as the gate with me," said Andrew, and she went. But after they had talked a moment Judith remembered the bats, so, of course, Andrew had to take her back to the porch in safety.

At length he was forced to go, so with a last "good-night," and a last long look into her eyes he strode away to his home on the hill.

The leaves of the chestnut trees were rustling in uncertain flaws of wind; the crickets were creaking eerily from out the darkness; the fields all pearled with dew, shimmered in the moonlight.

It was a solitary hour. But Andrew's heart was light within his breast; Judith's eyes had been very sweet when she said "Good-night."

And Judith climbed the blue-painted wooden stairs to her little corner-room, and lay long awake, forgetting the promise of her great future, forgetting the efforts of the past, forgetting the debt she owed her manager, only knowing that she loved and was beloved again, only recalling the eyes this brown young farmer had bent upon her, only remembering the tender strength of his arms, as, for a moment, they had encircled her. A simple dream this? Perhaps. But let such a vision once weave itself into the fabric of a life, and all else will seem poor and mean beside it.

It was a beautiful sunshiny Sunday as Judith stood in the porch waiting for Mrs. Morris, who presently appeared, clad in a black calico with white spots on it, black silk gloves and a bonnet with a purple flower.

Judith had dressed herself in a little frock of pale green linen, and her face bloomed like a rose above it. Her hat and parasol were of the same cool tint as her frock, and as the walk in the sunshine flushed her cheeks with unaccustomed colour, she looked much like a sweet pink flower set in green leaves; at least, so Andrew thought when he saw her entering the church beside Mrs. Morris.

The Methodist church was slowly filling with

women and children. Sam Symmons' Suse had just gone in, and the Misses Green were but a few yards behind. The men in Ovid had an evil habit of standing along the sides of the churches talking whilst the first hymn was being sung; and frequently, if there was any particularly interesting topic on hand, till the first prayer was offered. In winter the sunny side was chosen; in summer they availed themselves of the scanty shade afforded by the slanting eaves, standing, their heads and shoulders in shadow, their freshly polished shoes glistening in the sun, their jaws moving rhythmically as they chewed their wads of "black strap." A remark made at one end of the row percolated slowly to the other, each man judiciously revolving it in his mind and voicing his opinion in deliberate nasal tones.

"Lord, a little band and lowly,
We have come to worship thee,
Thou art great and high and holy,
Oh ! how solemn we should be."

So the women and children sang inside accompanied by a wheezy melodeon. They heightened the effect by emphasizing the adjectives strongly and singing "sollum" with great unanimity in the last line.

Andrew listened for Judith's voice, but evidently she had concluded not to sing. Andrew was disappointed. He had been looking forward in high glee to watching the amazement of his neighbours when they heard that marvellous voice. The truth was, Judith had not seen him where he stood beside the church, and was too busy looking about surreptitiously to see if he had fulfilled his promise about coming, to think of the singing either one way or the other. And when she saw Miss Myers sitting stiffly alone in the corner of a pew near the front, her heart sank like lead, and all her happy eagerness over the service departed. She was piqued, too, and began to feel a nasty heartache stirring within her breast.

The singing was over. An interspace of quiet betokened to those outside that the prayer was in progress, and a rustling of leaves and settling of dresses proclaimed the fact that the preacher and his congregation were ready for the serious business of the day, the proceedings up to this point being tacitly regarded as the preliminary enter before the weekly contest with Original Sin, that dark horse which, ridden by that snowing jockey, Opportunity, wins so many races for the Evil One. At this juncture the men came in one by one, each trying to look as

uninterested in his neighbours as possible, to give the impression that this influx of the male element was purely accidental and not the result of concerted movement.

It is somewhat doubtful if this impression was conveyed to the preacher, as the same circumstance had occurred every Sunday since he had been there; and certainly it deluded none of the women, who, well aware of the gossiping tendencies of their men, never held themselves at the approved "attention" attitude till this stage in the proceedings, but who then waxed marvellously stiff as to posture, and marvellously meek as to expression.

When Judith looked up next time, it was to meet two eager, grey eyes looking at her from Miss Myers' pew, and all at once the incipient heartache vanished, a calm of sweet content fell upon her spirit. She looked around, and apprehended all the poignant blending of pathos and absurdity about her. Her eyes softened as they fell upon old Sam Symmons' hard-wrought hands resting on the top of his stout stick, and lighted as she saw Tommy Slick's rose and white face and impish eyes showing above the door of a centre pew. Her tender eyes sought out and read the story of the deep-lined faces about her, and a great pity for their narrow lives filled her.

The sermon was just begun when the green baize door swung back a little, and an investigating dog entered. He was one of those nosing, prying, peering dogs which seem to typify so exactly the attitude of some people towards their neighbours' affairs. He peregrinated through the pews, around the melodeon, up and down the aisle, and then turned his canine attention to the preacher's reading desk. The preacher became manifestly uneasy; all his sensitiveness slowly centred in his heels, round which the dog sniffed. Judith, whose sense of the humorous was painfully acute, gave one glance at Andrew, and then became absorbed in trying to control her laughter. The dog still lingered where he was. The preacher's face was flushed; his words faltered. Every one felt that some one else should do something.

At length, after many significant gestures and nudges from his wife, Hiram Green rose and approached the dog with outstretched hand, rubbing his fingers together in the manner which we imagine impresses a dumb animal with a deep sense of pacific intentions. The dog backed away. Hiram followed as the dog retreated. It paused, wagging its tail doubtfully. Hiram sat down on his toes and patted his knee in a wheedling manner with one hand, whilst with

the other he made ready to grasp his prey. The dog came a little nearer.

Hiram grasped—but grasped short ; his fingers met on empty air, and he nearly overbalanced. For the moment he had the wild feeling a person experiences when a rocking-chair goes over with him—a sort of gasping clutch at *terra firma*.

Judith was nearly in tears from agonies of suppressed laughter, knowing, as she did, that Andrew was waiting to catch her eye. That, she felt, would finish matters so far as she was concerned ; a sense of companionship makes one's appreciation of a joke painfully intense.

Hiram was conscious that the Sunday School in the gallery was red with suppressed excitement ; that his neighbours' interest in the sermon was purely perfunctory ; he even had a horrible thought that the preacher himself was laughing at him. In this he was wrong ; the preacher was nearly distracted, having lost the thread of his sermon, and was maundering wildly on, hoping to disentangle his argument before Hiram caught the dog.

Hiram, grown desperate, added to his alluring gestures the blandishment of half-voiced words, which sounded like "Poor dog," "Good dog," but which meant, "You infernal brute." The

dog succumbed at length, its last suspicions allayed by this specious use of the gift it did not possess, and presently the congregation was edified by seeing Hiram, flushed, but with an expression of great loving-kindness, carry the dog gently down the aisle. Slowly and softly Hiram carried him until near the door, when circumstances made him accelerate his speed, for the dog was Tommy Slick's Nip, a shiny, smooth-coated dog, and Hiram's hold was gradually slipping. He had an unpleasant but confident premonition that the dog would reach for him, as dogs are prone to do, when his fingers got to the tender spot beneath the forepaws. However, he reached and passed the baize door in safety, and in the second which followed, the congregation, with the sigh with which one relinquishes an acme of intense and pleasurable excitement, turned its attention to the preacher. At that moment there came a shrill and ear-splitting yelp. Hiram had taken the dog to the top of the steps, and applied his foot in the manner most likely to speed the parting guest. Hiram entered and took his place with a very red face. He felt dimly that the yelp was a criticism upon the smile with which he carried the dog out. To Hiram that sermon did not tend to edification.

That particular Sunday was a memorable one in Ovid. The congregation had just gathered itself together after the incident of the dog, when the preacher announced the hymn. It was one of the few really beautiful hymns, "Lead, kindly Light."

Judith rose to sing with the rest, and with the second word her voice joined with the others, dominating them as the matin song of the lark might pierce through the chatter of sparrows along the eaves. When Judith opened her lips to sing, music possessed her, and, a true *artiste* to her finger-tips, she never sang carelessly. Absorbed in her book—for she did not know the words—she sang on. The people looked and wondered, and one by one the voices died away, the wheezy notes of the melodeon faltered forth from beneath the second Miss Green's uncertain fingers, and Judith sang on serenely, standing erect, her head held high, her soft throat throbbing like a bird's. Outside the air was golden with yellow sunshine, within it was cool and darkened. A rift of light slanted through the closed shutters of the window near which Judith stood; thousands of little motes danced in it, specks and gleams of gold. Through the open windows there came the odour of dried grass, and every now and then a flaw of wind

brought a whiff from Oscar Randall's field of white clover. Andrew had laughed in the meadow as he thought of Judith's voice electrifying the people in the church, but he had forgotten that he himself was not secure against its charm. Laughter was far from his thoughts now.

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on.
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on."

The words, upborne upon the wings of matchless song, seemed to soar far beyond the confines of the little church, taking with them the inarticulate trust and hope and confidence of all these humble folk.

The preacher sat looking at her, pale and entranced. This singing seemed suddenly to open a long-closed door in his life, so that once more he looked down that chimerical vista from out the misty distances of which illusive hands beckoned him on to brighter things. He had once dreamed of a loftier destiny than the life of a Methodist preacher, but that was long past; still it was sweet to recall so vividly the season when his spirit had wings. He sat before his congregation, a tall, spare man, large of bone and awkward, with a countenance upon which

self-denial had graven deep cruel lines, a brow that had weathered many bitter blasts. In type he was near allied to the people before him, the last man, one would fancy, whom dreams would visit. And yet, as he listened to this stranger girl, singing alone in the midst of his congregation, there fell deeply upon him the trance of dead delight; the simple panorama of his past spread itself before his eyes, blotting out the faces before him as a shimmering mist obscures an unlovely scene.

It was a very simple vision, a "homespun dream of simple folk." He saw a rosy-cheeked village girl, for whose sake he as a village lad had worked and toiled and slaved. He had fought for education and success that he might lay them at her feet. He had kept her waiting long. She was only a poor, pretty girl, and she had other lovers. One night, when her lover in a garret in the city was poring over his books, his head aching, his heart faltering, yet persevering as much for her sake as for the sake of his faith, she, driving home from a dance through dewy lanes and softly-shadowed country roads, promised to marry the farmer's son who was taking her home.

The news reached him in his garret, and something flickered out of his face which never shone

there again. But with the tenacity of his race he stuck to his work. His heart was in the green fields always, and he had come from a long line of country men and women. He had no inherited capacity for learning, but he got through his course somehow, and became an accredited minister, and the day he was ordained the news of her death reached him, and that was all. He had never censured her; in his thoughts she had ever been an angel of sweetness and goodness, and as Judith sang, all these things rushed back upon his heart. It was with a very white face and a very soft voice that he rose to address his people, and he spoke home to their hearts, for he knew whereof he spake when he dealt with the pains and trials and troubles of their lives. He was only the height of his platform removed from them, and he had paid dearly for his paltry elevation, but from its height he saw, far off perhaps, but clear, the shining of a great light, and with ineloquent, slow speech he strove to translate its glory and its promise to the people before him.

Church was over; the people pressed slowly along the aisle into the palpitant warmth of the summer afternoon. Miss Myers came up to Judith when she stood for a moment at the door, and invited her to go home with them to

the house on the hill, and Judith, nothing loath, consented. So presently she and Andrew, with Miss Myers, were walking through the slumberous little streets of the village.

As they drew near the house of Bill Aikins, they caught sight of him sitting on the doorstep peeling potatoes, beads of perspiration upon his brow, for he was suffering sorely from Kate's weekly infliction of a white shirt.

Bill had "a little wee face, with a little yellow beard, a Cain-coloured beard," and usually wore a deprecatory smile upon his countenance. He was possessed of a perfect temper, and whatever his lot might seem to others, to himself it was all that could be desired. To be the husband of such a woman, could man desire a better fate? And, indeed, Kate Aikins was a fine-looking woman, tall and straight. Old Sam Symmons often said she was a "gallant figure of a woman."

As they passed the house they heard Kate's voice sounding shrilly from within:

"He did *what*? Weighed the paper with the cheese? And you stood by and never said a word? I'll be bound! Well, 'a fool and his money is soon parted.' There's truth in them old sayings yet. The idea of you being scared to speak to Hi. Green and him cheating you before your very face! Land sakes! What's he I wonder? Next

time you go to buy cheese you take paper with you. He asks enough for the cheese without paying for paper."

As they got beyond hearing, Judith's face burned out of sympathy for Bill's embarrassment. However, Bill was in nowise troubled. He knew his wife would be quite as ready to express herself towards any one else in the village as to himself, and a philosophy born of that reflection entirely prevented Bill from feeling in any degree abashed by strangers enjoying his wife's eloquence.

It was only two days since she had announced to him with much satisfaction that she had "just told Sarah Myers what she thought of her," and she had expressed a longing desire of late to have a five minutes' talk with Andrew Cutler, relative to some supposed slight he had put upon her. The whole village was well aware of many instances of Bill's discomfiture when Kate first married him and undertook his reformation.

There was the day when Bill, well on towards being thoroughly drunk, was returning home down the village street, walking carelessly through the deep slush of early spring. Kate met him. She, if truth be told, was on the lookout for him, having despatched him more than two hours before to get some starch from the store.

Between waiting for the starch and waiting for Bill, Kate was wroth when she opened the door to begin her search. By an unlucky chance, her first step took her over the ankles in icy slush, which, strange to say, instead of cooling her wrath, raised it to white heat. Therefore, when she, carefully picking her way up one side of the street, beheld Bill advancing down the other, regardless of mud and slush, she paused in disgust, until he was nearly opposite to her, and then ejaculated in a tone of deepest disbelief in her own vision—"Bill! is that you?"

"No," promptly replied Bill, "nor nobody like me either;" with which the valiant Bill had resumed his way, feeling proud that he had not only dismissed certainty but even suspicion of his identity from Kate's mind.

Before long he was a sadder and for the nonce, a wiser man, for Kate reached home as soon as he did, and thereupon gave him to understand in a very unmistakable way that he was her property and she knew it.

All Ovid remembered this, and indeed could not well forget it, for every wash-day, when starch naturally cropped up as one of the circumstances attendant upon the event of washing, Kate might have been heard by any passer-by

giving Bill a full and dramatic account of the occurrence, with preface upon drunkenness in general, and appendix upon Bill's phases of the vice in particular, and copious addenda, of contempt, contumely and vituperation. Bill listened, marvelling and admiring, for her flow of language was a great source of pride to Bill, albeit directed at himself.

Indeed, he sacrificed his comfort willingly to enjoy the mental treat her angry eloquence afforded him. There had been times, however, when Kate's lessons had taken a more practical and infinitely less entertaining form. It was one of these which effected Bill's final reformation. The memory of it brought smiles to the lips of Ovidians, young or old, whenever they met Bill.

With all good managers in Ovid, it is the custom to salt down a small barrel of herrings in autumn. These they buy from their fisherman neighbours for a dollar per hundred. Now Kate, who was certainly, as even her enemies admitted, a forehanded woman, sent Bill with a silver dollar, to get her a hundred herrings, one day when the proper season came around. With this Bill duly proceeded to the fishermen, paid his dollar and got his herrings. As he turned to go, Sam Turner shouted an invitation to him

to come down at night and have a share of the beer which was to be on tap at the Upper Fishing Station. Bill assented and went his way.

After his six o'clock supper, he told Kate he was going to get his saw sharpened at the blacksmith shop, and so set out. He left the saw at the blacksmith's, then smartened his pace along the street, down the steep incline to the river's edge, carefully along the river path until he disappeared into the fisherman's little hut.

The door was closed, then Bill, Sam Turner, and some half-dozen others gathered round the keg of smuggled beer, and all went merry as the traditional wedding bell.

About half-past eleven, Bill and the others emerged. The cask was empty—their condition the antithesis of the cask's. Lurching, stumbling, falling, sliding along the river path; scrambling, crawling, plumping up the banks to the level, then along the street to Bill's home. All this took time, and it was the hour when ghosts do walk ere they neared Bill's door. A dim light gleamed in the window. "Beacon tha' lights me home, boys," said Bill, who, having passed the transitory phases of moroseness and pugnaciousness, to the higher state of tears and courage, had now reached the acme of sentiment and drunkenness simultaneously, and was ready,

as he expressed several times on the way up the bank in a voice which came from different attitudes, as the speaker stood upright, crept, or lay flat, "To kish Kate and fight for the country b'gosh." Bill and his friends approached the door. Bill gently tried it. It was locked, so Bill said. They each tried it in turn, and each pronounced it locked in a voice betokening a strange and new discovery. They each knocked in turn—silence. They each kicked in turn—silence. Then Bill said in a lordly way, "Kate, open the door!" adding in an aside to his fellows, "I'll forgive her, kish her, make her happy." Then again, "Kate, open the door!"

Kate did open the door, with such abrupt and unexpected suddenness that Bill, standing before it, balanced back on his heels and raised his outspread hands. His *confreres* were preparing to make back-stays of themselves to brace Bill up, when Kate's hand and arm reached forth, and, with one single movement, as Sam Turner afterwards graphically described her action, "yanked" Bill into the house and slammed the door.

There was silence for a moment, followed by a slow sliding sound. His late companions surrounded the two uncurtained windows and prepared to watch events.

Bill had slowly slid down, until he was now in a sitting posture on the floor, with his back against the door. Kate had vanished ; she soon entered from the back of the house bringing two pails of water, with which she proceeded deliberately to give Bill a cold bath. Bill said several times in a weak voice, " Kish me, Kate," but Kate, preserving an admirable silence, continued the deluge until Bill, with some show of sobriety and nimbleness, arose. By this time the water was pouring out beneath the door, and the watchers outside were shivering sympathetically. As Bill rose, he certainly looked miserable enough to excite pity, even in Kate's heart ; but the worst was not yet.

Disregarding the water streaming on the floor, Kate proceeded to arrange two chairs, with an accompaniment of cloths, knives, salt, and a small keg. Lastly, she produced two baskets of herrings. It was now evident to the horrified watchers that her dire purpose was to make Bill clean, wash, and salt down the hundred herrings then and there. And such was the case. The watchers stayed until eyes and limbs were weary, and then crept away awe-struck at the terrors of matrimony, and deeply impressed by Kate's moral supremacy.

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His hand was

unsteady, and his blood flowed freely from numerous cuts to mingle with the herrings. He scraped and scraped, and bedaubed himself with scales. He salted and salted, and the salt bit his many cuts. But Kate was inexorable. Every herring was cleaned, scaled, washed, salted and packed, and the *débris* thoroughly cleaned up before the miserable, white-faced, repentant Bill was allowed to rest, and during it all Kate talked and talked and talked. From that night Bill was a changed man, and his admiration for Kate became more than ever pronounced.

Every time one of those herring appeared on the table, Kate gave Bill a *résumé* of the whole affair, with variations upon her theme, which her vivid and fertile imagination suggested. After the herrings were finished, she revived the subject whenever the names of any of those with him that night, fish, the river, or the fishing station were mentioned. These were the regular cogent subjects. But any reference to salted meats, cold water, late hours, etc., was very apt to draw forth a like narration, so that a day rarely passed without Bill's memory being refreshed thus, which was indeed a work of supererogation, for Bill never forgot it.

Andrew and Miss Myers recited many such



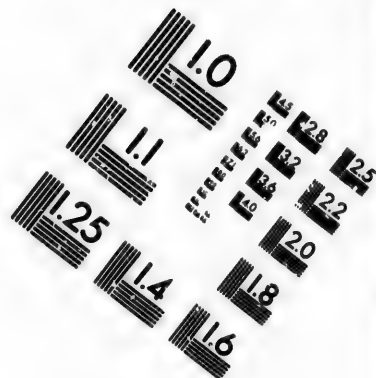
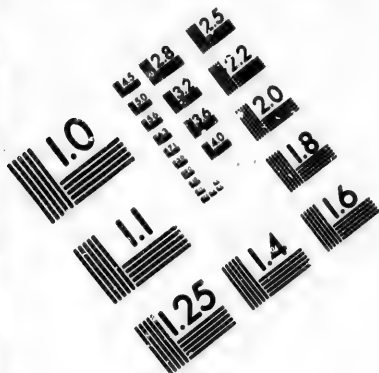
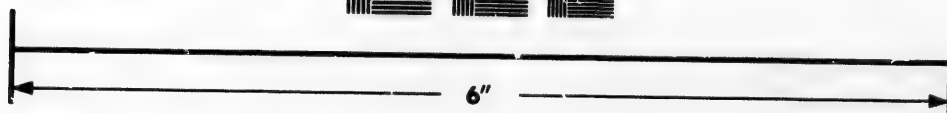
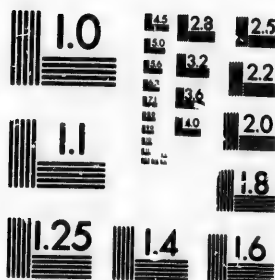


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tales for Judith's edification as they walked up to the Cutler house, and whilst they sat at table.

But later on, when Miss Myers hastened off to count the eggs which had been brought in, to see if her chickens were properly fed, and to generally look after the ways of her household, the talk fell into other channels.

Andrew and Judith talked seriously, looking into each other's eyes with no veil upon their own, each drinking deeply of the peaceful rapture of the hour. The scents from the old garden filled their nostrils, the breath from the box diffused through the other odours a thread of fresh bitterness, savouring them from satiety.

A great clematis hung at one side of the porch, the deep green of its leaves set close with purple stars. Upon the other side a Tartarean honeysuckle was covered with coral-coloured buds. Far off in one corner they could see a blur of gold where the thorny Scotch roses were a mass of bloom.

They sat long talking, and presently Miss Myers came round the corner of the house with her dress tucked up about her and the servant girl following with water pails; and soon the scent of fresh moist earth was mingled with the fragrance of the flowers.

Rufus lay at their feet, looking up at them with wistful, hazel eyes. It was a simple scene, yet in it was being enacted a drama of delight.

There is no sweeter time in a woman's life than the first hours of a mutual love ere speech has profaned it. Judith was having her halcyon hour now, and she rejoiced in it with sweet natural happiness. The memory of her greatness had all but faded from her memory; now and then from sleep's horizon it pointed a threatening finger at her; now and then in morning dreams she recalled it vaguely, the wraith of a not unhappy season. But she had no fear of it. Her only apprehension was that she had misread the message in Andrew's ardent eyes, and that fear only lived when they were apart, for, as she welcomed him upon the old weather-beaten doorstep, where the spent petals of the loose-leaved climbing roses lay, blots of crimson on the grey, or bade him farewell at the gate where the white syringas surrounded them with the odour of orange blossoms, she found in his eyes the strength and blessing of a deep and perfect love.

CHAPTER IX.

"Now, if this earthly love has power to make
Men's being mortal, immortal ; to shake
Ambitions from their memories, and brim
Their measure of content : what merest whim
Seems all this poor endeavour after fame."

ONE day Judith, who had been in the village, went up to see Miss Myers. It was intensely warm. To the eye the air seemed to quiver with heat ; a brazen sun shone in a cloudless sky ; the birds were still ; nature was dumb ; the only sounds which broke the stillness were echoes of enforced toil. As Judith walked along the lanes, now grown deep in grass, the fragrance of over-ripe clover came to her in waves of satiating sweetness. The birds she startled uttered no cry, but flew heavily to some near perch and sat there languidly, with feathers ruffled on their little heads, their tiny bills apart as if they gasped for breath, their wings drooping loosely with parted feathers at their sides.

When she reached the house on the hill, she

went straight through the hall to the kitchen, for she had long ago been given the liberty of the house.

Miss Myers bustled up with grim kindness, took away her hat, made her sit by the window, and brought her a great cool goblet of raspberry syrup in water. It was very cool in this big kitchen. The windows were heavily hung with Virginian Creeper, and the stove was in the summer kitchen. Rufus lay stretched in one corner, his ears flapping as he snatched irascibly at a tormenting fly.

Miss Myers had been a little upset when Judith entered, and she proceeded to tell Judith her worries. She had come out to inspect the kitchen work, and found her milk pans set out without their bunches of grass.

"A silly notion of Sarah Myers," the Ovid women called it, but it was a dainty one nevertheless—one Miss Myers' mother and mother's mother had always observed, since ever the first Myers left the meadows of Devon. This notion was that all summer long Miss Myers insisted that the polished milk pans, when set out to sweeten in the sun, should each have a bunch of fresh grass or clover put in it, to wither in the pan. She declared it gave sweetness and flavour to the milk.

Miss Myers had many dainty ways in her house-keeping. The glossy linen sheets were laid away with clusters of sweet clover in their folds. Her snowy blankets were packed with cedar sprigs. Her table linen was fragrant all summer with the stolen perfume of violets or rose leaves strewn with them in the linen drawer. And in the winter there were twigs of lemon thyme and lemon verbena there, carefully dried for that purpose. "All notions," the villagers said contemptuously, adding something about old maids. Nevertheless, these notions savoured the whole household with sweetness, and seemed to add beauty to the more prosaic details of every-day work.

Since Judith had come so frequently to the house, there had always been flowers upon the dining table and in the parlour, and in the big dim bedroom.

Hot as it was, Miss Myers was ready to go out and patrol the garden, which, subdued beneath the sun's caresses, lay exhaling a hundred varied scents. The tall white lilies were in bloom at last, ineffably lovely, with golden hearts and petals whose edges were silvery in the sunshine.

When Andrew returned at night from his fields, his strong face a little weary, his eyes

restless and eager, the first sight that met his vision was Judith Moore,—Judith, in a simple dark blue frock, standing in the doorway of *his home*, and looking—he dared hope—for *him*. She looked so consonant with the old house and the flowerful garden that Andrew felt no other presence in the world would have completed the picture so well.

How sweet to see a woman waiting there for him! Even as he had dreamed. He stood some time and watched her, himself unobserved. How sweet and calm her face was—yet anticipative, content—yet eager! He looked at her long across the narrow space from where he stood, and in after days recalled her untroubled beauty very clearly.

He tried to note in detail the form of her features, but he could only think of her faithful eyes, the beauty of her honest smile, the promise of her mouth, with the deep hollow between the lower lip and the dimpled hillock of her chin, which is, they say, the truest indication of a woman's capacity for real love, just as heavy eyelids denote modesty, and thin nostrils delicacy of the senses.

Some sympathy, some subtle mental influence, made Judith flush and look about her. Andrew slipped around the corner of the house, to come

behind her in a few minutes rid of the day's dust. He touched her gently on the shoulder. She started, yet laughed. "I knew you were coming," she said; "I did not hear you, but I was certain of it."

After tea, they three (for Judith felt shy of Andrew to-night, and clung to Miss Myers, and gently compelled her to step forth with them) walked up and down the garden walks.

The flowers, their fragrance freshened by the dew, flung forth their odours royally. The birds, revived by the coolness, were singing their deferred songs. An oriole's liquid note was answered from the lindens; the robins were flying about from tree to tree with happy confidence; some Phoebe birds were fluttering about the porch; sparrows were wrangling in the box; a humming-bird was darting from bed to bed; emerald-throated, ruby-crested, it vibrated from flower to flower, itself like an animated vagrant blossom; the swallows were darting in long, graceful flights high in air, or soaring in slanting circles over the barns, where their nests were; now and then, flying slowly homeward, a crow crossed their vision, a shadow on the sky.

The heavy toads hopped lumberingly forth from their hiding-places to search for slugs; a tree toad gave its shrill call from a cedar tree.

Andrew had once shown Judith one, clinging like a lichen to the bark, and of much the same greyish-green colour. The crickets sang shrilly and sweetly, like boy sopranos in a vested choir; the frogs, in a far-off pond, added their unfinished notes to Nature's vespers; bats flew silently and weirdly overhead.

"Do you know what the frogs say?" asked Andrew of Judith.

"No; what?" she asked, looking up so eagerly, so trustingly, that a smile twitched the corners of his mouth, even as he longed to gather her in his arms.

"The little frogs with the shrill voices say, 'Cut across! cut across! cut across!' The wise old frogs, the big ones, with the bass voices, say, 'Go round! go round! go round!'"

Judith listened, her eyes big with interest. "Why, so they do," she said, and looked at him as at a wizard revealing a mystery.

Miss Myers laughed, her grimness tempered by a tear. "Tell her about the mill-pond frogs, Andrew," she said.

"Oh, well, the frogs in the mill-pond over beyond Ovid, used to say, 'Old Andy Anderson is a thief! Old Andy Anderson is a thief!' and no one paid any attention; but after a while people found out he was cheating them, not

giving them the proper weight of flour, and so on, for their grists. Then they found the frogs were telling the truth."

"Mr. Cutler," said Judith, "did people know what the frogs said before they found out that the miller stole?"

"Well," admitted Andrew, laughing a little, "I don't believe they did."

In the instance of the mill-pond frogs the oracle was fitted to the event, as it has been in other cases.

Later the dusk fell, and the moon slowly soared aloft; a midsummer moon, indescribably lovely; such a moon as is seen once in a lifetime—pale, perfect, lustrous as frosted silver, white as unsmirched snow, seeming to be embossed upon the sky. Such a moon haunted Keats, inspired Shelley, whispered a suggestion of kinship to Philip Sidney, and long, long ago, shone upon the Avon.

And beneath this moon, intense as white flame, pure as a snow crystal, Judith Moore and Andrew Cutler began their walk to the farmhouse by the wood. Judith held her skirts gathered up about her from the dew; she was bareheaded, her broad hat hanging on her arm.

They had to pass along a path deep shadowed in trees. Judith started nervously at some

sound; that start vibrated to Andrew's heart. He drew her arm within his, and Judith walked dreamily on, feeling secure against the world and all its fears. They emerged into the moonlight, and stopped where Andrew had constructed a rude stile over the rail fence, for Judith's convenience. Their eyes met in the moonlight, each knew the hour had come, and the heart of each leaped to its destiny.

"Judith," said Andrew, very softly.

"Yes," she whispered.

"What is the sweetest time in all the world?"

She paused a moment; then, as a flower bends to the sun, as a flame follows the air, she swayed slowly towards him. "*Now*," she breathed, her heart in the word.

And the next moment she was in his arms; their lips had met.

From the shadows of the wood they had passed came the silvery call of the cat-bird that sings to the moon—and they two had drunk of "life's great cup of wonder;" only a sip perhaps, but their mouths had touched the golden brim, their lips had been dipped in its priceless nectar (the true nectar of the fabled gods!) and their nostrils had known the sweets of its ineffable perfume.

So they stood, heart to heart. All that the

world comprehended for Andrew was now in the circle of his arms. And Judith? All her world throbbed in Andrew's breast.

And for both there was no other universe but the heaven of their mutual love,—a heaven shut in and hedged about by two strong tender arms; a heaven sustained by two hands that fluttered pleadingly upon Andrew's breast. Not strong hands these, but strong enough to hold in safe-keeping the treasure-trove of a good man's love!

And their talk? Well, there are some sacred old-fashioned words, tender words, such as our fathers whispered to our mothers long ago, such as *their* fathers, and their fathers' fathers, wooed and won their wives with, such as their wives whispered back with trembling lips—these words passed between Andrew and Judith. We all dream these words. Some few happy ones hear them; some brave true souls have spoken them; and from some of us even their echo has departed, to be merged in unending silence. So we will not write them here.

And at last they parted. Andrew strode slowly homeward, his face glorified, stopping now and then to fancy he held her once more against his breast, feeling again the fragrance of her hair, hearing in the happy throbs of his

heart her trembling words saying that she loved him.

Loved him! The mystery and magic of its meaning wrought into his heart, until it seemed too small to hold its store of joy. He took off his cap in the moonlight, and looked to the heavens a voiceless aspiration to be worthy.

And well might Andrew Cutler bare his brow, for there had been given into his hands the holiest chalice man's lips know, the heart of a good woman! Well might Judith Moore, in a burst of happy tears, vow vows to be worthy, resolving to be better, stronger, nobler, for she had been given that great gift for which, we are told, thanks should be rendered, fasting—the gift of a good man's love!

“MY DEAR MASTER,—After all, you see, I am the one to write first, and I am afraid you will be very angry when you read my letter. But I hope you will forgive me. I will tell you now, at once, what it is, and while you read my letter try to forget I am Judith Moore the opera singer, and remember only that I am a woman first and foremost. And a woman needs love, and I have found it, and cannot bear to give it up, as I must, if I come back to you—to the stage. So, will you set me free? Will you let

me stay here? Will you let me stop singing and be forgotten? I know how dreadful this will seem to you, how ungrateful I will appear, how ignoble to give up my art for what you will call 'a passion'; but oh, dear master! you cannot know all this is to me, this love. It is *everything*, health, happiness, hope, all. And it is not that I have forgotten your gifts; indeed, indeed, no. It is that I am so sure of your great generosity, that I want you to be still more generous; to add one more gift, the supreme one. For in spite of what I've said it all rests in your hands. I know what you have spent on me, in money alone, besides your continual thought for me. I know how patient you have been, letting me save my voice till it was mature and strong. I know you will have horrible forfeits to pay on the lease of the opera house, and then all the chorus on your hands, and the terrible advertising for this American season. I know the horrible *fiasco* it will seem to the public, and how your jealous rivals will make capital out of the mythical *prima donna* who did not materialize. But all this is the price of a woman's whole life, the purchase money of a life's happiness. Will you help pay it? For I will do what I can. There is the money you gave me after the Continental season. It is

untouched; take that. And there are my jewels—all these gifts, you know—in the vault. I send you the order for those. And the man I love may be richer yet, and I will say to him, 'I owe a dear friend a debt,' and you shall have, year by year, all we can send. Does it not seem that in time I might make it up? And the artistic disappointment you feel, oh, master! To lose my art seems indeed a crucifixion to me, but in that there is hope of resurrection. To lose my love would be unending death.

"I know myself well now. I am a woman full-grown within these last weeks, and even as I write I know that I will have many bitter regrets, many sad hours, thinking of my music; but what are these hours compared with an unceasing pain such as will be mine if you say no to my dream? Of course, I know I am bound to you by no contract; but the confidence you have shown in me binds me with a firmer bond, and if you feel you cannot release me I will do my best, my very best to realize your hopes. You know I am honourable enough for that. But one thing, dear master, I lay upon you. If you come for me, taking me away from my happiness, remember never to speak to me of it, never refer to this letter, never tell me your reasons for refusing the boon I crave from you

on my knees. If I see you I shall know I have asked too much, and that it has been denied me. There is but one thing more. The man, my man, is utterly ignorant of my money value. He sees in me only a woman to love, take care of, and work for. He does not know that I can earn more in a week than he in years. He realizes most keenly the beauty of music, but he does not know what it brings in the markets of the world. I would ask him to let me sing, but I know well that such singing as mine demands the consecration of all; when I sell my voice, the body, the heart, the soul goes with it, all subordinated to the voice. That would not do. He has given all, he must and shall have all in return, all I have to give, or nothing. He knows me only as a woman who came here for rest, quiet and health; he does not dream my name is billed about the city on coloured posters, talked of as a common possession by every one—does not know the papers are full of my doings or intentions. So you see it is myself he loves. And now, master, this is good-bye. Good-bye to you and the old life, which, before I knew any better, seemed the best of all. I hope I may some time see you again, but not till I can greet you without too great joy in my release, without too keen pain for my music.

"Send me a line and tell me I am free, and believe me, ever and ever, Judith Moore, your own grateful little girl.

"P.S.—I have said nothing of my gratitude to you, but this letter means that or nothing. Means that I am so sensible of what I owe to you that I will give up my very life showing you that I do not forget your long-continued kindness.
J. M."

This was the letter the post took away from Ovid next morning, a letter written not without tears.

After the music of the gods has once been breathed through a Pipe, it is never quite content to echo common sounds, not even if its heart be given back to it, and it be born again a growing reed among its fellows; even if it echoes back the sighing of the summer wind, and is never torn by the tempest; even if it grows continually in the sunshine, and never bends its head beneath the blast; even if it be crowned with brown tassels, and all men call it beautiful. It still has the hungry longing, the dissatisfied yearning, the pain that comes of remembered greatness, even if that greatness was bought at bitter cost. The true gods may well

"Sigh for the cost and pain,
For the reed which grows never more again
As a reed with the reeds in the river."

For that pain is poignant, and perhaps more of us endure it than is imagined. It may be, these inexplicable yearnings of our souls for some vague good, these bitter times when not even life seems sweet, these regrets for what we have not known, for what we think we have never been, for what is not, these may be dim memories from ages back, from the times when the voices of the gods spake through men, and men gave heed to them, and, unmindful of their own personal pain, proclaimed to man the messages of the gods. And though this birthright brings pain with it, yet we, growing like other reeds, and proud as they of our brown tassels, or sorrowing, like them, for our lack, are proud also to know that of our kind the gods chose their instruments for the making known of their music to men. The yearning for the divine breath may be better borne than the cruel *afflatus* it imparts, and yet we are glad that once we were not unworthy to be so tried, and not all rejoiced that the keener pain, the higher honour, is taken from us.

Sometimes before a great storm an illusive hush holds sway, a perilous peace falls upon the face of nature. With it, a mysterious light irradiates the sky; a solemn sunshine, prophetic

of after rains, the forerunner of tempest—a luminous warning of wrath to come. In some such fashion surely the face of the angel shone when he, as the writers of tales tell us, drove our parents out of Paradise.

It was this illusory illumination that gilded the lives of Judith Moore and Andrew Cutler at this time. How few of us read the rain behind the radiance!

They were both happy. As a parched plant vibrates in all its leaves, stirs and quickens when given water that means life to it, so Judith Moore's whole being trembled beneath its baptism of love. For she seems to have had no doubt that her manager—her "master," as she lovingly called him—would grant her request. Already her past life, with all its work, and waiting, and triumph, seemed but a dim dream, her present hope the only reality. She ran about the Morris house so lightly that it seemed to Mrs. Morris she heard the patter of children's feet, the sweetest sound that ever wove itself into this simple woman's dreams.

Judith's heart was ever across the fields with her lover, and she "sang his name instead of a song," and found it surpassing sweet. And Andrew's heart and head were both busy with loving plans for Judith.

The Muskoka woods might go, and their green mosses be torn for minerals! No more long, lonely hunts for him! He must reap golden harvests wherever he might for Judith, now, He knew all her insufficiencies as a housewife, which poor Judith felt very humble in confessing; and it gave Andrew great joy, in a modest way, that he would be able to let her be quite free of them.

And he had higher dreams. Politics offers a wide arena for ambition. Its sands may have been soiled by the blood of victims, trodden by the feet of hirelings, defiled by the struggles of mercenaries; but there are yet some godlike gladiators left, who war for right; there are yet noble strifes, and few to fight them; and Andrew, in whose heart patriotism was as a flaming fire, resolved to dedicate himself for the fray. To win glory for Judith, to do something to savour his life that it might be worthy of her acceptance, that it might leave some fragrance upon the tender hands that held it—that was his aim, and he felt he would not fail.

No inherent force can be very great and not give its possessor a thrill of power. Andrew felt within him that which meant mastery of men. And in spite of difficulties and obstacles, Andrew at last won the wreath to which he had aspired in the first flush of his hope and joy.

But that was after.

One day, a week after Judith had sent the letter, a group of Ovidians were in Hiram Green's store. There was old Sam Symmons, Jack Mackinnon, Oscar Randall (who, together with his hopes of political preferment, aspired to the hand of Sam Symmons' Suse), and Bill Aikins. The latter would "catch it," as he well knew, when he got home, for loitering in the store, and therefore, with some vague thought of palliating his offence, forbore to make himself comfortable, but stood uneasily by the door, jostled by each person who came in, pushed by each who went out.

Jack Mackinnon was speaking, his thin dark face wreathed in smiles.

"How d'ye like the blind horse, Mr. Symmons? I tell ye blind horses are smart sometimes! There was one Frank Peters, wot I worked for in Essex, owned, and he never would eat black oats. Critters has their likes and dislikes same as people. I once knowed a dog—but that blind horse—well, he'd never eat black oats when he had his sight—went blind along of drawing heavy loads—doctored him all winter—t'wasn't any use, sight gone, gone complete—well, as I said, he wouldn't eat black oats

when he had his sight, and when the horse was blind, sir, he knowed the difference between black oats and white, yes, just the same as when he had his sight. You couldn't tempt that horse to eat black oats, then or no time, he wouldn't so much as nose at 'em, no sir. You couldn't fool that horse on oats. But pshaw! blind horses! why Henry Acres wot I worked for in Essex—"

"Oh, shut up, Jack!" said Hiram, and Jack accepted his quietus good-naturedly, quite unabashed.

The village arithmetician had once taken the trouble to calculate how long Jack Mackinnon must have worked in Essex, deducing the amount from Jack's account of the number of years he had worked for different people there. The result showed Jack must have spent some hundred and sixty years in Essex if all his tales were true; and Jack always repudiated with scorn any question of his veracity, hoping, with great fervour and solemnity, that he "drop down dead in his tracks" if he was lying, a judgment which never overtook him.

The talk turned upon politics, as it always did if Oscar Randall was there, and old Sam Symmons was soon holding forth.

"Yes," he said, "yes, the old elections were

wont to be rare times. I do remember at one election, near the close of the polls, beguiling Ezra Thompson to a barn, and there two of us held him, by main strength and bodily force, till the polls were closed. Truly he was an angry and profane man when we set him free"—here came a reminiscent chuckle, cut short to answer Oscar Randall's tentative question.

"Trouble? Get us into trouble? Yes, of a private kind. Ezra Thompson and I fought that question with our fists some seventeen times, and the lad with me had much the same number of bouts over it. But we neither of us begrudged him satisfaction. In those days a man took satisfaction out of his enemy's skin; he didn't sneak away to lawyers to bleed him in his pocket. No, no.

"Yes, 'twere a great election that! 'Twas the time Mr. Brown ran against Mr. Salmon. Now, it was told of Mr. Salmon, that though of good presence, and very high and mighty towards his neighbours, yet he was ignorant; and when his election came on, it was told of him how he met an English gentleman on the train once, who, wishing to learn of Canada, spoke at length with Mr. Salmon, and in the course of the talk (during which Mr. Salmon was much puffed up), the English gentleman said to him: 'And have

you many reptiles in Canada?' 'No,' said Mr. Salmon (and a pompous man he was, very)—'No, we have very few reptiles, only a few foxes.' It was Mr. Salmon, too, who once refused when he was J. P. to look into the case of a poor man whose horse's leg had been broken in a bad culvert. And the man cried in a gust of rage: 'What! did you not swear to see justice done? and now you won't consider this?' 'Swear,' said Mr. Salmon, 'I did no such thing. I only took my affidavit.'" Old Sam's voice died away.

Hiram spoke from behind the counter. "The roadmasters do bring the country into terrible expenses. Look at the bill of costs that's been run up in that case at Jamestown."

"Yes," said Oscar Randall, as one having authority, "the people's money is wasted in this country with an awful disregard of the public welfare."

"You're right there, Os." "Now you bet your head's level." "Don't you mistake yourself, it's level!" "I tell you, you just hit the nail on the head that time!"

When this chorus subsided, Mr. Horne, who had just entered, said:

"What do you think of that concession, Os, out back of Braddon's?"

"There is no doubt," said Oscar, promptly, "but that is a question which must be adjusted. It is such internal disputes as these which weaken and destroy the unity of the country, and lay us open to an unexpected attack from the States, which we, by reason of disunion and strife, would be unable to cope with."

The house, composed of Hiram on his sugar barrel, Sam in the one chair, Jack Mackinnon on a cracker box, and a row of men braced against the counters on each side, fairly rose at this. Clearly Oscar Randall had the makings of a great speaker in him!

But Mr. Horne was a man of slow mental methods, who always decided one point before he left it for another. He waited till the chorus of "That's so; that's the ticket," "Bet your life; *that's* the way to talk," "Let 'em try it; we'd be ready for 'em" (this last from Jack Mackinnon who was a volunteer) had died away, when he said:

"That's right, Os; you're right there, right enough; but what do you think—ought it to be closed or should it be opened?"

"I think," said Oscar, slowly, and with confidential emphasis—"I think, as every patriotic and honest man thinks, that the rights of the people must be preserved."

A diversion occurred here. A shout from the roadway took them all out. Before the door stood a carriage with a little black-a-vised man in it; and behind that, an express waggon, beside the driver of which sat a perky-looking woman, different from anything ever seen in Ovid, for French maids of the real Parisian stripe were not apt to visit this village often.

"The way to old man Morris' ? yes," said Oscar Randall, and proceeded to give minute directions.

The little cavalcade started again, the gentleman leaning back in the carriage, murmuring to himself:

"Now, I wonder which of these specimens he was."

.
And at that moment Andrew Cutler and Judith Moore were taking farewell, for a few hours as they thought, beneath the shadows of Andrew's chestnut trees.

"Darling," he whispered, holding her gently to him, "my arms seem always aching for you when we are parted; my heart cries for you continually. Judith, dear little girl, you won't make me wait too long?"

She clung to him silently, hiding her face on his arm. A tremour shook her; after all he

was a man, the dominant creature of the world. True, he trembled at her voice and touch now—but then, after?

"Andrew," she whispered, "will you be good to me?"

"Trust me, dear, and see," he whispered back.

"You know I have no one but myself," she said, putting back her head and looking at him with pale cheeks and tear-filled eyes. "If you are cruel to me or harsh to me; if you make love a burden, not a boon, I will have no one to turn to. I—" she stopped with quivering lips.

"My own girl," he said, "trust me. I know I am rough compared to you, but I will be tender. I know my man's ways frighten you, but it shall be all my thought to make you trust me. Give me your presence always, that's all I ask—to see you, feel you near, hear you about the house, have your farewells when I go away, your welcome when I return, your encouragement in what I undertake, your sympathy in what I do. That means heaven to me, but only when you are happy in it. Dearest, you don't think I would be bad to you?"

And Judith, in a storm of sobs that seemed to melt away all the icy doubts and fears that had assailed her, laid her head upon his breast, and promised that soon, very soon, she would go to

the house on the hill never to leave it; and, when she had grown calmer with a deeper peace than she had yet known, he left her—there, in the shadow of the trees—to return in a few hours.

And Judith stole into the kitchen door and up to her room, to find her French maid packing her trunks and be told that "Monsieur awaited her in the *salon*."

.
Her vow had been required of her—that was all she could think, and she prepared herself to keep it.

The manager was clever and adroit in his way. He kept Mrs. Morris busy with him, so that she did not see Judith till she entered to say she was ready; and then, as Mrs. Morris told afterward, she got a "turn." For the Judith who came to say "good-bye," was the same Judith who greeted her at first, gracefully languid, pale, self-composed, and somewhat artificially, if charmingly, courtesus.

"There was some difference," Mrs. Morris said, "but I can't just say what."

The difference was that Judith had come a girl, and left a woman.

So for the last time Judith crossed the little garden, feeling strangely unfamiliar with the homely flowers she passed. In the meantime

the drivers of the conveyances had conferred with Mr. Morris, and the shorter road they took to the railway station was directly away from the village, away from the house on the hill.

They caught a glimpse of it as they turned a corner, and suddenly Judith seemed to feel the scent of white lilies, and hear an evening chorus of nature's composition. Her hand held tightly a little envelope, in which she had hurriedly slipped something before she left her room.

She was thinking how she could drop it unobserved, when from the shadow of some wild plum trees there issued a disreputable dog—Nip—with Tommy Slick behind him, a basket of wild plums in his hand.

She interrupted the manager's flow of news to say—

"Do stop the man a minute, I want to speak to that boy."

"I'll call him."

"No, no; I'll get out," she said.

So without more ado he stopped the carriage; the whims of a *prima donna* must needs be respected.

She got out and ran back to Tommy, who greeted her with a grin.

"Tommy," she said, "you like me, don't you?"

And you like Andrew Cutler? Now, will you do something for me that no one else in the world can do?"

"I'll do it," said Tommy, with business-like brevity.

"And you will not breathe it to any living soul?"

"I kin keep my mouth shut," said Tommy. "Often had to."

"Then," said Judith, "I'll trust you. Give this to Andrew Cutler; if you run you will catch him in his chestnut woods. Try to get there quickly, and meet him before he gets near Morris'. Give him this, and say: 'She has gone away! she sends all her love and this.'"

Tommy's impish face had a look of concern beyond his years. Tears were running down Judith's face.

"Say, be you never coming back?"

"Never, never, Tommy!" said Judith. "Good-bye."

.
So in due time Andrew Cutler received from Tommy Slick's fruit-stained hand an envelope containing one long bright lock of hair, and a message sent with it; and was told also of the few other words that passed, and of Judith's tears. And Tommy having delivered his message, and seen the look on Andrew's face, dug his knuckles

into his eyes, and with a veritable howl of grief fled away back as he had come; and Andrew suddenly looked about and found life emptied of all joy.

Judith seemed so very calm as the weeks went by, that her manager told himself he had been a fool to worry so that night—after he returned her letter to the post-office, and decided to go and fetch her from Ovid. He had sent it back, so that if she had refused to come, or—yes! he had thought of that, being so imbued with stage ways—if she had hinted at killing herself, he might declare with clean hands that he was guiltless, that he had never had her letter, that some one else had got it and sent it back to the Dead Letter office. But, after all, how foolish he was, he thought, watching Judith smile, and reply prettily to the courtesies of some guests whom he had just introduced to her. But then, her letter had seemed full of meaning! Well, that letter was doubtless a manifestation of the stage-craft with which she was thoroughly saturated! So he comforted himself. And meanwhile, Judith was learning that “Face joy’s a costly mask to wear,” and asking wearily of each day that dawned, “*Is not my destiny complete? Have I not lived? Have I not loved? What more?*”

And the time for her American *début* drew on,

CHAPTER X.

"Glory itself can be, for a woman, only a loud and bitter cry for happiness."—*Madame de Stael*.

JUDITH MOORE made a triumphant success of her first American season.

She was lauded to the skies. An ocean of praise was poured in libations before her; its ripples spread across the Atlantic, to break in an ominous wave at Patti's feet, and Patti seeing it, perhaps feeling the chill of its encroachment, determined immediately upon another American tour.

There is a picture of Judith Moore painted at this time by one of the deftest masters of facial portraiture. Sittings were given for this whilst past applause was echoing in her ears, with newer shouts awaiting her in an hour or two; but the woman pictured upon this canvas is neither hearkening to past applause, nor anticipating new honour. She is absorbed in the dream of some sweet past, silent in the face of some unachieved joy, the whole face illumined

by an after-glow from some light of other days—a first radiance of a morn that never breaks. It shows a woman with wide, wistful, grey eyes—eyes which had wept, and lips that denied and defied the tears, a brow whereon triumph and grief had warred for mastery and merged at length into patient endurance; but the head is proudly poised, as a head should be that bears a crown. Even a thorny one confers and demands honour. If this woman bore a cross, she did not flaunt it in the face of men; she bore it hidden in her heart, and drew it out in secret places to wash her heart's blood from it with her tears. Tears are the salt of love that savour it to time everlasting.

It was the fashion to say that Miss Moore dwelt upon the heights to which her genius of song raised her, that from the peaks of success she looked down contemptuously upon all beneath. Alas! They could not tell how icy these pinacles were! The roseate glow cast upon the "eternal snows" may look very beautiful, but the humblest hearth where love lights the fire is warmer.

She felt, indeed, the exaltation of genius, but upon every side she looked forth into the void. She was possessed again by that agony of vertigo that had seized her among the apple

blooms; now, as then, she stood among blossoms; now, as then, her heart sickened within her. But there was one deadly difference; there was no strong arm to take her down. Indeed, it seemed to her even the ladder was gone. Could any man forgive the perfidy of which she had been guilty? Many a hand was outstretched to her, some that would have soiled her own had she clasped them, others she might have met honestly, palm to palm. She brushed gently past them all; if some of them tugged at her skirts, it only gave her some discomfort and pity for their pleading, but no pain.

Her manager was most enthusiastic over her. He remembered guiltily a letter he had opened and read, a letter he sent back to the post-office with apologies—"he was sorry, the letter was not for him"—a letter which even now was slowly threading its way back through the Dead Letter office pigeon-holes to an undreamed destination.

He was working her too hard, though—so musical people whispered among themselves. She had always needed the curb and not the spur. Of course, it was a great thing to get such a hold upon the public in one's first season, with the sure knowledge that she would have to bid against Patti in her next one; still, all

these *encores*, and Sunday concerts and extra *musicales* were felt to be too much. And one or two men, whose souls were sensitive, ceased going to hear Miss Moore. There was something of agony, personal agony, mingling with the passion of her voice. One of these men shuddered, when some one, using a hackneyed simile, spoke of her as a human nightingale. There came to his fanciful imagination the old myth of the nightingale that sings with her breast against a thorn. It seemed somehow to him that this woman had grown delirious with the pain, and pressed sorer and sorer upon her thorn. He thought, too, of the birds whose eyes they blind that they may sing better; of the dove that bears

. . . . "thro' heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings."

He thought of the swan's song of death, and of the reed that the "Great God Pan" wrenched from its river home to fashion forth a Pipe. The American papers laughed a good deal at this man, caricaturing him as the poet of soulful lilies and yearning souls, hinting that he would like to inaugurate a pre-Raphaelite era in America *à la* Burne Jones. He read these

things sometimes. They flushed his thin cheeks, but did not trouble his eyes—those eyes that mirrored forth the soul of the mystic. He was right about Judith Moore.

She bowed her head to accept the last accolade of Genius—grief. She had partaken of pain—that chrism which, laid upon poetic lips, sanctifies their words to immortality, but which savours the breath they breathe with the bitterness of death. Byron, Shelley, Keats, Rossetti (how many we might name!) have partaken of that sacrament. But what matter for the Pipe, so that the world, when it has time to listen, may hear sweet singing? The world, in its way, was very good to Judith Moore. It gave her the sweet smile of its approval right royally; it gave her all its luxuries, all its praise, and this Judith did not pretend not to enjoy. But she enjoyed it as one does who drinks what he knows will kill him, yet continues the draught, that in its intoxication he may forget the doom it brings.

Judith was seen everywhere, for she availed herself of all the privileges which her genius, her beauty, her untarnished fame won for her. She was pointed out wherever she went; sometimes when a crush of carriages held her own imprisoned, she would hear a whisper from lip to lip,

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"Look! look! There is Judith Moore." Nothing further was needed; every one knew Judith Moore. And Judith treated the world as it deserved of her. She dressed herself beautifully for it, and smiled and sang to it, and exhibited herself to it everywhere. Everywhere, for she was striving to so tire her spirit that when she was alone it might at least be numb, if not at rest. In vain! That ardent, tender spirit was yet indomitable. The body, the slender, beautiful body it animated, might be sore weary, but so soon as Judith was alone her spirit fled far away, back to the place of its rejoicing; back to the village in the valley, where it was always spring or summertime; back to the old rail fences with the tangled weeds about them; back to the apple blooms; back to the brown furrows where the grey birds nested; back to the lindens and the chestnuts, and there, hour after hour, her spirit held voiceless commune with that other. Her spirit well might be comforted, but Judith strained listening ears to hear one tender word, wearied her eyes searching for the semblance of a face, stretched forth trembling hands for comfort, and, overcome at last, let them fall, empty.

The opera season closed, and an incident that

made some talk put the period to Judith's first American season. Judith had sung as she never sang before. Her voice seemed to transcend the limits of human capability, and become something independent of her lips, something sentient, springing ever higher and higher.

The man in whose heart she was likened to the pierced nightingale, the blinded lark, the mourning dove, the dying swan, had come to listen to her. At her last appearance there was a roar of applause, a wave of laudation that seemed as if it might carry her off her feet. There is something thrilling, inspiring, almost weird in the union of human voices, something that stirs the imagination, something that never grows old to us, for it never becomes familiar. Usually they jar and jangle across each other as children babble, each fretting for his own toy, so that we almost forget what the power of union is. In praise or blame it makes the world tremble.

She made no pretence of retiring for the *encore*. She made no sign to the musicians. She did not assume the pose, familiar to them, for any of her songs. They sat silent, spell-bound with the audience. She stepped slowly forward, stretched forth her arms, and sang unaccompanied, what seemed an invocation to

the better Ego of every soul present, a song she had been wont to sing to Andrew :

“ Out from yourself !

Out from the past with its wrecks and contrition,

Out from the dull discontentment of now,

Out from the future's false-speaking ambition,

Out from yourself !

For your broken heart's rest ;

For the peace which you crave ;

For the end of your quest ;

For the love which can save ;

Come ! Come to me ! ”

Those who heard that song never forgot it. And one man, at least, never forgot the expression upon the woman's face as she sang. Rapt as of a sibyl who conjures away an evil spirit ; winning as a woman who promises all things ; informed with the intensity of one who bids her will go forth to accomplish her desire—she held her last pose a moment. The house “ rose at her.” Even as they cheered a change overspread her face. It grew glorified, exultant, tremulously eager, as of one who feels the pinions of his soul stirring for flight—for flight to longed-for shores. With that look upon her face she fell.

Far away from New York, in the silent

spaces of a virgin forest, a man was lying on the snow, his gun beneath his arm ready for use. But he was keeping no lookout for game. His eyes were fixed upon an open space amid the tree tops, where a solitary star twinkled desolately. His face was thin; his eyes burned; the snows, the silence, nor the solitude could calm that throbbing at his heart, could cool the fever in his veins. He thought of Judith, and, thinking of her, loved her. It was true she had left him, left him with his kisses warm upon her lips, but—he loved her. It was hard for him to imagine a force strong enough to constrain her to go. It was difficult, having no clue, to conceive of circumstances that would justify her silent desertion, but somehow Andrew, out of the depths of his steadfast heart, found excuses for her. Sometimes the fantastic thought that she was bound in loveless marriage came to him, but he put it by. He remembered her eyes, the misgivings that had assailed her, the tender abandon of her trust in him. No, she was not married. Where was she? It was not her wish that he should know. He hoped her little feet trod pleasant paths. Oh, Judith, Judith! Then, explain it as we may, or leave it still a mystery, there came to him, faint, æëry, bodilessly, the words of a song—a song that

ended in a plea, "Come! Come to me," and when it died away, Andrew Cutler sprang to his feet with a cry that echoed far between the icy tree trunks of the forest, "I come, I come." And that same night, at the same hour, at the same pulse of the hour, Judith Moore, with a look of ineffable joy upon her face, fell fainting upon the stage.

"So may love, although 'tis understood
The mere commingling of passionate breath,
Produce more than our searching witnesseth."

Next day Andrew started back to Ovid, arriving in a state of feverish expectancy. No tidings of Judith there; and he knew not where to seek. That pleading voice still rang in his ears; by night, by day, it urged the message it had brought to him in the depths of far-off Muskoka, and by day and night he promised it peace, if he could only, only know where to go.

Time passed.

The voice was dumb now. Only an acme of surpassing love can wing the will through space, and then only perhaps once in a lifetime does such a supreme moment come, and the will behind this love was shattered, for Judith Moore lay sick unto death, was tossing in the delirium

of fever, or lying for days sunk in an apathy which words could not pierce. The papers were filled with accounts of her strange illness, daily bulletins of her condition appeared, her manager was showered with opprobrium for overworking her. She was dying. The best doctors said that the miracle was that she had lasted so long. Her little dark-faced manager went about feeling like a murderer, a Shylock, and a Judas, in one. The more so, as he felt he had given her the death-blow in one stroke—when he disregarded that letter. If he had only overworked her, he told himself he would have had no regrets. He would have made any reparation he could, but how on earth was he to find the yokel she was in love with? And what a battle she was having; and yet it was not such a very long one—from latest winter to spring.

Andrew was half crazed with love, which, since that winter night, had become almost unendurable through anxiety.

Now it was spring, and as he walked through his woods to the Morris house, he passed the crab-apple-trees in full bloom. He often went up to talk to garrulous Mrs. Morris. The little details she let fall about Judith were pearls of great price to him.

This day he was hardly within the door before Mrs. Morris said:

"Land sakes! but you're just the very person I was wanting to see. There's a gov'ment letter come to Miss Moore yesterday, and I thought you'd maybe know where to send it."

"Yes," said Andrew, feeling that the sign had come at last. "Give it me, and I'll see she gets it."

He took it, and with scarce a word went away, leaving Mrs. Morris considerably upset by his abruptness.

He only waited to get within the shadow of his woods before he tore it open. One reading of her pleading letter to her manager sufficed. Judith was his again. He knew where to find her. New York!—that was not so very far off. He knew when the trains started, and rapidly made his plans. She was such a child! and she liked his old velveteen coat and the big, battered felt hat; he would wear them; she would be pleased; and as he came within sight of the crab-apple-trees a happy thought came to him. He took his knife and cut a huge bundle of flowers, taking off the branches where the flowers were only in bud.

Then he went home.

His aunt heard his hurried explanation, and bound a great roll of wet moss about the ends of the branches.

"They'll look queer, Andrew," she said.

"Never mind how they'll look," said Andrew, happily; "she'll like 'em."

He was soon on the train, a picturesque figure in tweed, with an old velveteen coat, a wide shabby felt hat, and an enormous bunch of pink flowers. Andrew was entirely oblivious of, and indifferent to, comment. He got hold of a trainman, gave him a dollar and got a pailful of water from him, arranged his flowers in it, put it in the baggage-car and sat by it all night. "A queer duck," the trainmen said.

As the Canadian trains reach New York, the morning papers come aboard. Andrew bought one of each, and sat down turning them over with tremulous hands to search for a sign. He had not far to seek—"JUDITH MOORE DYING, THE END APPROACHING." That was what he read in big "scare head" type; that, and its narrations in the other papers, with the usual platitudes telling of the "short but bright career," and so on. With the calm of despair he searched for definite information as to where she was. It seemed every one knew so well that definite detail was superfluous. But at last, in a different part of the paper, he found: "In the corridors of the Brittany Hotel last night, Miss Moore's manager, who had just left

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her bedside, said all hope was gone." The train was in New York, slowing up in the Grand Central station by the time he found this. He wrapped a couple of handkerchiefs round the stems of his flowers, got into the first carriage he came to, saying only "the Brittany Hotel." He thought the cabman might know where to go. The cabman, of course, did, and ere many minutes he was in the office of the magnificent hotel.

He knew nothing of conventional procedure, and if he had, it would not have mattered to him then. He went straight to the desk.

"Is Miss Moore alive?" he asked.

"Yes, I think so, but—"

"I want to go to her at once."

The clerk comprehended, and a bell-boy raced before Andrew to a door whose handle was muffled. He knocked very softly. "Go," said Andrew, and he stood alone waiting for the door to open. It would be impious to speak of the agony which knit his soul and heart to endurance, whilst he waited the word from within.

The door opened. A miserable little man stood there. When he saw Andrew, he said without astonishment:

"You're in time to speak to her. Go in."

Andrew advanced to an open door. The

little man followed through the outer room. He beckoned to two others within the sick-room, a white-capped woman and a doctor. They saw, understood, and Andrew went up to the bed alone with the door closed behind him.

"Judith," he said, "my own little girl."

A long tremour shook the slight form under the coverlets, and then—then he was on his knees with the flowers flung all across the bed and his arms about her. And Judith? Poor Judith's eyes were wide and frightened, for she thought the change had come that she had waited for, expected, even longed for; she thought this was Death, and even although the crab blooms were there, and Andrew, still it was awesome. Yet Death should have brought white flowers, not apple blooms such as grew in Andrew's woods. And were Death's arms ever so sustaining, so tender, so warm as these? And surely Death did not come garbed in shabby, smoky velveteen, nor bend above his victims a brown passionate face wet with tears?

"Andrew, it's you, and you're crying," and then followed a faint whisper of delight—from her—for Andrew's courage and calm were gone at last. He could not speak. And once more she smiled at him the old womanly smile, from the old honest eyes, and stretched forth feeble fingers striving to reach about his neck.

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CHAPTER XI.

L'ENVOI.

"Fair love that led home."

JUDITH MOORE did not die. She had fallen asleep that day with her fingers trembling about Andrew's sunburnt hair. He held her tenderly till a deeper sleep weighted down those clinging hands, and they fell.

He watched by her, without movement, almost without breathing, with the look on his face as of one who battles with Death, pitting all the splendid vitality of his being against the enemy, casting the mantle of his brave soul, strong will and perfect love about the trembling will and failing heart that were so nearly vanquished.

Indeed, so completely did Andrew identify himself during those silent hours with the woman he loved, that ever after she had some fleeting touches of his courage, and he had always an intuitional tenderness towards a woman's illogical weakness.

The fusion of these two natures took place

not in those sweet after hours of passion, but in that silent room, into which now and then there peeped a white-capped nurse or a black-a-vised little man, who saw always a great mass of fading pink blooms, a pair of broad shoulders in shabby velveteen bent tenderly over the shadowy outline of a little head sunk deep in the pillow.

After this supreme crisis there came a week or two of slow convalescence, and then a wedding that no one thought much of, regarding it merely as one of the prescribed formalities, like the buying of the railroad tickets, necessary before Andrew could take her away—away back to the village in the valley, to the old stone farm-house, to the homely flowers, the lindens on the hill, to Rufus and Miss Mers, where, for a time, she was not a wife at all, only a poor little wind-tossed song-bird blown to their bosoms for a refuge.

But that all changed.

Andrew wooed again a charming, capricious woman, walking by her adoringly over the old bricked walks beneath the horse-chestnuts, his very soul trembling with the love her voice and touch awakened; and she was playfully proud of her power, until suddenly some quick sense of the dominance of the love she aroused frightened

her, and she turned to hide from him in his arms, tremblingly afraid, no longer asking love, but pleading against it.

Time passes with them. The old farm-house has had some architectural additions—a tiny conservatory, a long dining-room, with quaint porches and latticed windows; for Andrew and his wife appreciate too keenly the beauties of their home to mar its character by modernizing it. Andrew has learned to wear evening clothes as easily as he does his old velveteens, and—*O si sic omnia!*—himself often buys the little high-heeled shoes in which Judith's heart delights, for Judith never put off the old Eve of her harmless vanities.

Every winter Andrew and his wife go to town for a while, and visitors come to the farm-house who fairly electrify the village with their "cranks."

The best known of these is a little black-a-vised man with big diamonds, a profane tongue and a guilty but "thankful 'eart." He cherishes, so he says, a hopeless passion for Miss Myers, and indeed Miss Myers likes the new *régime* very well, for she was never ousted from the house-keeping department, and if it was a glory and a credit to manage well for Andrew and herself, how much greater it is to

cast honour over a board where such fine people as Judith's friends sit daily.

Andrew is secretly very proud that all these fine folk should come and see how happy Judith is. Only once did he have any difference with any of them. That was when Judith first regained her strength and her old manager came to see her. He had a brand-new scheme for Judith's benefit in his brain. She was to sing in grand concerts, and he had all her tour mapped out. He was good enough to say Andrew could come along. Andrew held brief and bitter speech with him, and then went to Judith. He could see how strong the old glamour yet was. He took her in his arms, and after a long, tender discussion she gave him the promise he was pleading for, never more to sing in public, a decision which made Andrew her slave forever, although it wrung his heart to see what this renunciation cost her. He felt it was right. Poor, high-strung Judith needed a steady hand upon the rein of her eager spirit, else it would have soon carried her beyond her strength. And so, ringing about an old farm-house, or through the chestnut woods, or below the lindens on the hill-side, there often sounds a voice once echoed by the *bravos* of the world. Perhaps the aspiration it awakens in one strong soul is better applause.

So Andrew and Judith live on, they two and Miss Myers, as nearly happy as mortals may be. Heaven would be entirely illogical if such as they two had no heartaches.

Sometimes Judith steals away from Miss Myers and Andrew and thinks of the old days, the first efforts, the hopes, the fears, the strife and the success—the glorious success that might have been many times repeated; that might, as base metals might be transmuted into gold, have become fame. A nasty heartache gnaws in her breast, her face pales, her eyes grow wide and eager. At such times Andrew knows well the struggle that rends her tender heart, and he soon searches her out; and upon his breast, beneath the spell of his worship her restless spirit quiets itself to peace. What might be a tragedy of distrust is made a bond of stronger union by perfect confidence. But Judith's face will always bear the traces of these times.

When a coal is carried from the Divine Fire and laid upon mortal lips, it must be blown into a flame to illumine the world, or it sears the lips it touches. The gods will not have their gifts disregarded. They care little that the mortal breath may be too weak to sustain the flame, though it perish in the effort. Indeed, the gods forgive that, and sometimes spare a little of

their glory to gild a grave. But let the breath they demand be stolen for our own sighs or sobs, or stifled by dear-bought kisses, and they give swift recompense of pain. Judith had borne that smart.

Andrew, too, has unfulfilled dreams, as Judith knows when she sees his eyes grow wistful as they rest upon the faces of children. And Judith goes to him then, and lays her head upon his arm with an apology so poignant, a love so perfect in her grey eyes, that he forgets everything in the marvel that this woman is his. And thus with each of them, the little shadows only serve to enhance the sunshine. Their life is a glorious reality; their love a poem. Together they know no pain from the past, no regret for the present, no fear for the future. They sometimes even dare to dream that their love will bestow upon them its own immortality—that through eternity they will be as they are now, together and happy.

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